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ABSTRACT

The case study examined the development of English writing skills in a native Russian-speaking college student with no previous instruction in English as a Second Language. It drew on writing samples from 2 years of English language instruction. Theories of first and second language acquisition, especially in written expression, are analyzed in relation to observations of the writing process, interviews with the subject and his instructors, and analysis of written products. Analysis of errors and syntactic maturity of the compositions found that errors decreased and syntactic maturity increased over the 2-year period. No correlation was found between number of errors and syntactic maturity. Information from formal oral interviews conducted with the subject, when compared with his writing development, indicated greater syntactic maturity but also more errors in writing than in speech. The subject had considerable writing anxiety. A questionnaire concerning his attitude, beliefs, and strategies, administered to the entire class, revealed that the subject was not typical in many ways, such as in his perception of his own second language abilities. In addition, his compositions reflected some classic stages of acculturation, including culture shock, anomie, and eventual assimilation. (MSE)

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ED 391 392

COMPOSING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF A RUSSIAN COLLEGE STUDENT

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Reading and Language Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education
National-Louis University

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ABSTRACT

This is an interpretive case study of a second language college level student's writing processes and development over the course of two years. As such, it is an attempt to give a qualitative perspective to second language writing development.

Theories of first and second language acquisition, especially in the area of written expression are analyzed in light of the results obtained during observations of the writing process, interviews with the subject and his instructors, and analyses of the written products of the case study subject composed at two different institutions of higher learning.

An analysis of errors and syntactic maturity of the compositions were methods used to study the subject's writing development. Errors decreased and syntactic maturity increased over the course of two years. No correlation was found between number of errors and syntacitc maturity and assessment by outside readers from the English Department.

Formal oral interviews were analyzed and compared to the subject's writing development. Syntactic maturity was greater in writing, but number of errors were less in oral expression at the same level of second language instruction.

The problem of writing anxiety was a major focus of this study. The subject's undue concern for correctness may have resulted more from his basic personality than from the second language instruction he had received.

Results compiled from questionnaires about attitudes, beliefs, and strategies used by the case study subject and his classmates during reading and writing in a second language are also described. The case study subject was not typical in many aspects, such as his perception of his own second language abilities and his attitudes toward learning English grammar and vocabulary.

A major focus of this study is on social-affective factors in second language acquisition, since social distance and the stages of acculturation have been found to be important variables in successful second language acquisition. It was inferred from interviews with my case study subject that his perceived social distance to target language members of his new culture was small. Moreover, his compositions appeared to reflect some of the classic stages of acculturation, such as culture shock, anomie, and eventual assimilation.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Dr. Jiazhen Hu, one of my committee members who provided me with invaluable assistance. His expertise in the area of second language acquisition and linguistics will be sorely missed by all the committee members as well as the entire university community due to his untimely death in August of 1995.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In order to provide greater insight into the problems facing second language students at the college level as they attempt to meet their academic requirements and enter into the mainstream of American life, this study is intended to give a qualitative perspective to second language writing development. It is an interpretive case study of one college level student's writing process and development in a second language over the course of two years.

New methods of teaching writing to first and second language students based on theories of language acquisition are now being practiced with younger students. However, second language writing instruction at the college level is still primarily based on older and atheoretical paradigms, such as the audio-lingual method.

The behavioristic emphasis on correctness of grammar patterns through repetitious drills to the point of automaticity in the audio-lingual method could affect the ease with which second language writing is acquired. The influence of personality and learning style of the student are additional factors involved in second language acquisition.

The importance of acculturation of the second language learner into the culture of the target language may be the most crucial aspect in second language acquisition. It is postulated that the stages of assimilation are ideal and necessary for second language acquisition to take place.

Second Language Research

I found great interest in the studies about strategies that students choose and use as they are acquiring a second language. According to Wenden (1987), earlier research focused on what learners practice as they learn a second language, but not on the assumptions underlying their choice of strategies.

How language is used, learning about the language, and personal factors are what Wenden investigated among adult second language learners. The strategies, personal factors, and beliefs of second language learners forms a major part of her study, as they do in mine.

Chamot (1987) also claimed that investigating students' learning strategies is a relatively new endeavor in the field of second language learning. These strategies can be classified within three general categories: metacognitive, cognitive, or social-affective. She also found that classroom observation was not as useful as student interviews about strategy use.

Second language teachers have also been reconsidering the best context for language learning--the natural way by acquisition or learned through a more formal grammar-based curriculum. According to Wenden (1987), the significance of errors and the best way to deal with them has also been a controversial issue. A rationale for analyzing errors to understand strategies used to acquire a second language forms an important aspect of my study.

In her surveys of second language college students, Horwitz (1988) found that the minority of students who were concerned with correctness would probably have difficulty accepting the communicative model of second language learning now more common in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Concern over correctness of grammar and the communicative model of second language learning are two of the major areas of second language instruction that I have addressed in my research.

Learners who state that feelings and self-concept are important echo the concerns for affective factors that encourage a more holistic approach to second language learning and teaching (Wenden, 1987). Such an approach for college level second language instruction will also be discussed later in my dissertation.

Because the methods of first-language composition instruction have been utilized as well for second-language writing instruction, it is necessary for second language (L2) writing researchers to be aware of first language (L1) writing research. According to Zamel (1984), what research into second language composing processes has taken place seems to corroborate research in first language writing.

Emig's (1971) landmark first language (L1) research was a major study which shifted from product to process, a relatively new paradigm for investigating composition (Krapels, 1990). Emig (1971) used a case study approach and gathered data using "composing- aloud audiotapes" and interviews with first language writers about their writing processes. Emig collected the students' preliminary notes, outlines and final written products.

In his dissertation, Gundlach (1977) also examined the documentary evidence for the composing process, such as a writer's notes and scratched-over drafts. By examining the case histories of several writers and college students, he concluded that such analyses of "mistakes" and drafts gone astray provide the least studied, but perhaps the richest kind of information about the process of composition.

It was my intention as well to examine my case study subject's drafts and mistakes to unearth what I could of such rich information into second-language composing. These are primarily the methods I used to study the writing process of my case study subject.

Composition research has centered around four areas: Studies on controlled composition focus on the lexical and syntactic features of a text, whereas English as a Second Language (ESL) current-traditional rhetoric focuses on discourse-level text structures.

The process approach, on the other hand, attends to the writer's composing behaviors, while the English for academic purposes approach focuses on the reader (the academic discourse community). In my literature review, I will primarily be describing controlled composition and the process approach to research methods of investigating second language acquisition.

In one cluster of first language theories, the writer is viewed as originator of written text, and the process through which the writer goes to create and produce discourse is the most important component in the theory (Johns, 1990).

There are two groups within the process camp, the expressivists and the cognitivists. In expressivism, writing was considered an art, a creative act in which the process of discovery of the true self is as important as the product.

Thinking and process are two key words in cognitivist discussions. Thus the writer's mental processes are of central importance to cognitivists. Using think-aloud protocols and other techniques, cognitivists have found that complex writing processes are not linear or formulaic, but individual and recursive. Thus the writer's mental processes are of central importance to cognitivists.

The modern ESL classroom encourages pre-writing, invention, several drafts of a paper and delayed fixation with correction of sentence-level errors until the final editing stage. In an interactive approach, text is created through a dialogue with another conversant (Bakhtin, 1973).

Hinds (1987) refers to English as a "writer-responsible" language, since the writer is primarily responsible for effective communication. In other countries, such as Japan, it is the responsibility of the reader to understand what the author intended to say. According to Johns (1990), it is the cognitivist or writing as problem-solving who has had more effect upon ESL research and teaching.

English as a second language (ESL) professionals have recently been affected by the new writing emphasis within the mainstream English teaching profession, since students exiting ESL courses are now expected to write well in English as measured against standards established for writing in English as a native language. As a result, more research has been carried out on second-language writing (Valdes, Haro, & Echevarriarza, 1992).

Raimes (1987) compared ESL students' composing processes with other researchers' findings on first language writers and concluded that both groups had much in common. Silva (1990), however, complained of the dearth of comprehensive theories of second language writing and believes that reliance on theories of first language writing is not adequate.

Background

My interest in second language writing acquisition began as a result of my correspondence with a Russian scientist, Jenya, whom my husband and I had met him at a concert we attended in Leningrad during a short trip to Russia in the Spring of 1990. By the time I took my first doctoral course the following fall, I had already considered analyzing Jenya's letters to study the writing development of a second language learner.

I returned to Russia the following two summers, each time participating in an intensive Russian as a Second Language program through the University of Arizona's Russian Institute. Initially it was a way to enter the country, but also to experience the problems in learning a second language myself and to better understand them from the perspective of a student.

During the Russian language program that took place during the Summers of 1991 and 1992, Jenya and I would also converse as we traveled in his car to distant and local sites or visited in his suburban flat. Many of our conversations were taped and transcribed and they became the body of my initial qualitative study.

Comparison of Russian and U.S. Pedagogy

I was also able to utilize my Russian experiences into two pilot projects for my dissertation. The first summer I compared the methods of teaching a second language at Leningrad University with that of the Language Institute at National Louis University. I observed ESL classes at National and interviewed the Chair of the Applied Languages Department. (The interview form can be found in the Appendix).

Upon reaching Leningrad, I observed my own teachers of Russian as a Second Language and interviewed both the director and the principal of the department.

The reasoning behind this inquiry was the fact that I was teaching students who had completed the English as a Second Language Program at National-Louis University in a course designed to bridge the gap between the ESL curriculum of the Language Institute and that of the regular college program. I believed it would be helpful for me to understand how and what they had been previously taught in the Language Institute.

What I concluded from my interviews and observations is that the Language Institute's approach to second language instruction is primarily an audio-lingual method that is based on the behavioristic paradigm of repetitive drills of correct English patterns.

In contrast, the University of Leningrad's Department of Russian as a second language utilizes a communicative approach to prepare second language learners to function successfully in a new environment. Correctness of grammar is not as important as are the functions of language.

Comparison of Russian and English Orthography

During my second summer in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, I compared the orthographies of the two languages, Russian and English. Since I had become intrigued with early writing and invented spelling during my coursework at National, it was only natural that I would have chosen to study the orthography of the Russian language for my second internship in reading.

I interviewed other students from the U.S., as well as analyzing my own efforts at spelling in a second language. Russian sound-symbol association is more regular than English, but there is still difficulty in assigning the correct vowel with the sounds that are heard. The second syllable is usually not completed sounded out. Therefore, as in English spelling, one cannot rely strictly on phonics but must use visual memory to spell Russian correctly.

There are also problems with Russian handwriting as well. Several symbols in the Cyrillic alphabet, such as the lower case "b," resemble a similar letter in the Roman alphabet, but are assigned different sounds. This causes interference when an English speaker attempts to write in Russian.

My Case Study Subject

I was fortunate enough to find an equally interesting subject from Russia from among my students at National, so as to compare his/her English writing development with that of my correspondent in Russia.

As it turns out, I found the appropriate student in a most serendipitous way, just as I had found my original Russian subject in the seat next to me at a concert. Interestingly enough, music was the common denominator in both cases.

He, Sasha, came to my attention during the Fall of 1993 while I was in charge of the tutors for several high-risk courses at National. I had determined that the Intro to Music course needed Supplemental Instruction and was given the name of a likely candidate for our music tutor. From his name, I suspected he was Russian, but did not find out till after I had hired him that he had only completed Level II of the Language Institute. I was apprehensive that he might not be able to communicate adequately in English with his students, but my fears were unfounded.

As part of my duties as Supplemental Instruction

Coordinator, I observed my subject as he tutored and began to participate in his rehearsals for the quarterly campus recital. During my mentorship of this student, I learned that Sasha, who took great pride in learning English, had retained all his English compositions from Level I to the Level III which he was currently taking at the Language Institute. Moreover, unlike some of his classmates, he had not been taught English previously in his native country. He was thus as "pure as the driven snow" as far as learning English in this, his newly adopted country was concerned.

Placement in the Language Institute

Since Sasha had not had any English instruction in Russia at all, he had been placed into Level I in the Spring of 1993 shortly after his arrival in this country. Based on his oral interview, he was later offered the chance to begin at Level II when he came to register, an opportunity he chose to disregard. However, the fact that oral assessments may not be as accurate an indicator of academic proficiency as might reading or writing is addressed in Chapter 2 in my literature review and in interviews with my case study (see Appendix B).

ESL students are placed into one of five levels based primarily on this oral assessment. However, the Language Institute is currently developing a written assessment as well. The oral interviews are given to determine interactional proficiencies (Slaughter, 1988) and are administered prior to Level I, after Level III and after Level V.

An ideal attitude

My subject appeared to be an ideal candidate in another important respect; he exhibited the motivation and self-confidence so necessary to make progress in learning a second language (Dulay and Burt, 1977 and Schumann, 1987). He always attempted to communicate in English even though he was very early in the stages of second language acquisition.

Since his job was to convey in English the musical knowledge gained after years of taking and teaching music in Russia, the impetus was there to do so. He had the expertise in his subject area, his natural intelligence and a fine 'ear' which he used to perfect his English pronunciation and intonation.

Although my subject's oral interviews had indicated to his interviewers at the Language Institute a higher degree of correct pronunciation than might be expected for someone new to the English language, he was extremely reluctant when it came to completing his written assignments for Levels IV and V during the Winter and Spring Quarters of 1994. I had suspected he was having this difficulty when he reported that he had spent the entire Spring Break completing his compositions for his Level IV teacher.

What was causing this writer's block? Was this an aspect of his second language acquisition or were other factors also involved? My literature review, therefore, addresses writing behavior in first and second languages in an attempt to understand the difficulty my case study was having in writing in English.

Speaking and writing, productive skills, are considered by some linguists to be more difficult than listening and reading which are receptive skills. Moreover, some instructors believe that listening and speaking must precede instruction in reading and writing in a second language. Because I had found such an "ideal" subject in all the other aspects of second language acquisition except for writing, I still hoped to be able to conduct a longer interpretive study than what had previously been reported.

As it turned out, the primary focus of my study is still on second language writing development, but it also includes the other productive aspect of language, oral expression. The reading/writing connection was also a necessary component of my study.

Nevertheless, according to Burgess (1988), language is an arena rather than a subject and has always been multidisciplinary. A focus on language without a shift of awareness into culture and history will leave conceptions of language and learning shorn of a fully social account.

Purpose of Dissertation

I am focussing on the broad question of literacy and the stages of acquiring a second language. Having studied the works of Piaget and Vygotsky, it was only natural that an inquiry such as this would have been so appealing to me. However, I needed to narrow my focus into a study that was realizable.

The new emphasis on writing in the educational literature has raised a number of important theoretical questions for researchers involved in studying the acquisition, learning, and teaching of second languages (Valdes et al., 1992). These are the same broad research questions I hoped to address in my study:

1. How does writing ability in a second language develop?

2. What relationship is there between the development of writing ability in a second language and the development of other language skills?

The purpose of my study is to describe and analyze the development of written expression of a college student learning English as a second language, focussing primarily on his perceived and actual progress over the course of two years. The influence of his own culture and language and that of his new surroundings forms a pivotal area of my research. I also address the role of instruction as it affected his writing development.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because of the focus of this study, the major emphasis of my literature review addresses theories, research and instruction in second language acquisition, especially in the areas of oral expression and writing development. First language acquisition theories, research and instruction are also addressed when it becomes necessary.

There were several general questions that guided the literature review. How do individuals learn or acquire a second or third language? Are there developmental stages in second language acquisition? Are the strategies and processes the same or are they different from learning a first language?

There were other issues that guided my literature review. What are the differences which exist between oral and written expression in second languages? What metacognitive processes are involved in second language writing? What is the impact of culture on second language learning? And what is the role of instruction in second language acquisition?

Second Language Acquisition

In many cultures, it is necessary or desirable to learn more than one language. Being able to express the same thought in different languages enables the bilingual child to see his language as one particular system among many so that he becomes aware of its linguistic operations (Vygotsky, 1962). Lambert (1972) also argued that in language immersion programs, children practice a form of incipient contrastive linguistics while comparing the syntax and vocabulary of their two languages.

Are there similarities between learning a first and a second language?

Spolsky's General Theory of Second Language Learning

Spolsky's general theory of second language acquisition is a good summary of the research that has so far been done. When college-age students like Sasha learn to listen, speak, read and write in a second language, they will probably already know about the function of language mentioned previously (Halliday, 1973). Spolsky (1988) arrived at a general theory of second language learning that accounts for the fact that people can learn more than one language and for the individual differences that occur in such learning.

According to Spolsky (1973), knowing a language is knowing its rules. The ability to handle new sentences is evidence of knowing the rules that are needed to generate them. Therefore, language is both redundant and creative.

The social context determines the opportunites for language learning, both formally and informally. Included in social context are the conditions of the learner, his capabilities, and previous knowledge and experience. Some of these capabilities are believed to be universal, such as the innate capability for deriving a grammar, inferring interpretation from speech acts, and presuppositions about the uses of language (pragmatics).

Other capabilities are specific to each learner's own background, linguisitic and nonlinguistic. Previous knowledge of the first or other languages, age, language-learning aptitude, learning style and strategies, personality factors, such as anxiety, are factors which affect how the learner uses the opportunities available to him.

Another feature of Spolsky's (1988) model is that language learning is individual and occurs in society. In this respect, Spolsky (1988) is in agreement with Vygotsky (1962) and Schumann (1978), the latter's research to be addressed later in this chapter.

Theory of Interlanguage

The theory called "Interlanguage" describes acquisition of a second language as a process involving hypothesis-testing while the speaker is learning his/her second language, just as is done during first language acquisition. During this process, there is a continuum between the speaker's first language and his/her acquisition of a second language.

Interlanguage talk, according to Krashen (1983), is defined as the speech that takes place between such second language acquirers (1983). It is modified so as to promote communication, just as mothers do when they use "motherese" when speaking to their child.

Errors as strategy

Corder (1967) has suggested that both native and second language learners make errors in order to test out certain hypotheses about the nature of the language they are learning. It is a strategy that when used and discovered by the researcher provides evidence of learner-internal processing. Error analysis is a useful method for studying writing development.

Kroll (1990) states, however, that the question of errors is a major concern in any examination of native or second language writing because there is no single written standard that can be said to represent the "ideal" written product in English. Mistakes of learners are often the result of internally consistent and carefully worked out but misguided interpretations of language. Error analysis has offered the insight that many errors on the part of English as a Second Language (ESL) students stem from intralingual errors within English.

Error Analysis

According to Nystrand (1982), the paths of writing and language research have seldom crossed. Discussions of writing made no mention of language, and discussions of language commonly avoided mentioning writing. " However, the possibility of achieving communication and purpose by composing texts is a problem no less awesome and perplexing than any other aspect of language such as relations between thought and language or the development of speech itself" (Nystrand, p. 58).

This lack of error analysis in writing reflects how such questions have not been raised by linguists and psychologists. According to Nystrand (1982), this is surprising given the extensive use of error analysis in the investigation of other language processes including speech production and reading.

In 1978, the Russian psychologist, Luria, conducted an investigation of children learning to write using such an error analysis. Given lists of words they could not memorize, children invented their own scribbles that served to aid their memory. From these case histories, Luria characterized writing as a way of organizing internal psychological operation.

His study also demonstrated the usefulness of both failure and error analysis to gain knowledge of intangible mental processes. That is, the demonstration of pattern of error and systematic discrepancy offers important clues to the underlying structure of the behavior in question (Nystrand, 1982), not unlike the miscue analyses taking place in reading research.

Error analysis was another practice used to provide information for devising remedial lessons (Mellon, 1969). According to behavioristic learning theory, the prevention of errors, the goal of contrastive analysis, was more important than the identification of errors. However, an emphasis on error prevention during second language instruction may have as constraining an effect as Harris (1962) had discovered with first language students.

Nevertheless, Corder (1974) brought back an interest in error analysis and gave it a new direction. He distinguished between lapses and errors, classified and explained errors and finally evaluated them. In this way, error analysis can also provide information about the process of acquisition--the sequence of development through which second language learners pass.

Shaughnessey (1987) studied errors of both native and second language learners. She found that teachers expected less of foreign students, since their errors were caused by linguistic difficulties rather than academic deficits, even though both kinds of students were often learning a second language. Another difference is that these native students have never experienced success in English writing, while the second language students may not have experienced similar failure in their native tongues.

The task of helping such students master the formal grammar system depends upon being able to trace the line of reasoning that has led to erroneous choices. Sometimes habit will control his choice in the direction of his mother tongue, leading him to use a form that is present in that tongue but absent in formal English (p. 104).

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory forms a major focus for my interpretive case study in several respects, especially as it applies to the affective factors influencing my case study subject. Krashen's (1982) work on Acquisition Theory describes how communicative competence or functional ability in a new language (L2) arises from exposure to the language in natural and meaningful settings. According to him, rules, patterns, vocabulary, and other language forms are not learned as they are presented, but are gradually established in the learner's repertoire on the basis of repeated active and passive experience during meaningful occasions of language use. He thus distinguishes between _learned_ and _acquired_ second languages.

According to Krashen's theory, there is also a _natural order_ to what is acquired, the sequence of morphemes having been described in a few limited studies. However, the learner needs input that contains exemplars of the language forms which according to the natural order are due to be acquired next (Krashen's _input hypothesis_).

While he later changed his mind on natural order, Krashen (1982) believed that acquisition takes place when the learner understands language containing input + 1. During this time, the acquirer is focussed on the meaning and not the form of the message.

Krashen describes input (i) as 'casting a net' in order to make certain that it is of an optimal size, providing a built-in review of language forms already acquired and guaranteeing that i + 1 is covered. Vygotsky (1962) had already postulated that learners operate in a zone of proximal development and that learning takes place when input is provided at a level just past the point where the learner is currently functioning.

Especially important to second language acquisition by adults, such as college students, are the affective factors which can cause anxiety and interfere or block acquisition.

Krashen's affective filter hypothesis helps to explain why persons with high motivation and self-confidence and low anxiety have low filters and so obtain and let in plenty of input. The role of affect is especially important in explaining my case study subject's second language development.

Krashen's monitor hypothesis posits a device that learners use to edit their language performance. This is done by utilizing learnt knowledge to act upon and modify utterances generated from acquired knowledge. Time is required to utilize the monitor or learned competence, so that it is employed to a greater extent during writing and less during speaking. The focus during monitoring must be on form rather than meaning and the user must know the rule involved. This aspect of Krashen's theory will be discussed in my analysis of data.

Several causative factors are also involved in the Monitor model. Krashen found that attitude is important in acquisition of a second language. Krashen's "attitude" factor is more fully developed in Schumann's Acculturation Model which I have used to help explain my case study subject's second language acquisition.

Krashen did not believe that first language interferes with second language acquisition (SLA), but is a "performance strategy" that a learner falls back on when he lacks a rule in the second language (L2). He initiates an utterance using his first language and then substitutes second language lexical items, making small repairs to the resulting string by means of the Monitor. This performance strategy on the part of the second language learner might also be called transfer or Interlanguage.

Age influences second language acquisition in that older learners are better suited to study language form and to use learned knowledge (Krashen). Older acquirers like Sasha generally make faster progress in the early stages of second language acquisition because of their instrumental motivation and their broader experience (Johns, 1988).

In the long run, however, younger acquirers tend to attain a higher level of proficiency because of their lower "affective filter." Conversely, age influences the affective state of the learner, so that after puberty the affective filter is likely to increase in strength. Age and affective filter form crucial possibilities to explain my case study subject's writing behavior.

Scovel (1979) suggested that the critical period for second language acquisition which is prior to puberty had its greatest impact on pronunciation. The significance of age in my case study is considered, especially as it affected Sasha's pronunciation in his second language.

Among criticisms made about Krashen's Monitor Theory is the fact that the only evidence lies in the language user's own account of trying to apply explicit rules. However, such metacognitive studies are commonly used to study the process of reading and more recently in writing. Think-alouds during the writing process and retrospective interviews were widely utilized in my study to tap the processes involved in second language writing.

Kroll (1990) compared undergraduate foreign students' compositions produced under time constraints and at home. Each essay was graded for errors at the sentence level and globally. She found that time itself did not lead to significant difference between class and home performance. Moreover, the issue of available time is very important in Krashen's Monitor Theory.

Ellis' Variable Competence Model

Ellis' Variable Competence Model refers to the process of language use, as well as its product. This makes Ellis' model especially important for my case study, since Krashen's (1982) model on the other hand, refers only to production and is limited to syntax.

Learners and users do have the ability to edit their pronunciation, lexis and their discourse (Ellis, 1985). Ellis claims that it is the way a language is learned that reflects the way it is used. The product of language use comprises a continuum of discourse types ranging from entirely "unplanned" to entirely "planned." According to Ellis (1984), oral expression may be considered unplanned discourse and written as planned discourse.

Second language performance is variable as a result of whether primary processes employing unanalyzed second language rules are utilized during unplanned discourse or secondary processes are employing analyzed second language rules in planned discourse (Ellis, 1985). On the other hand, development occurs as a result of acquisition of new second language rules through participation in various types of discourse. The subject "actualizes" his abstract knowledge of sentences to create utterances in discourse.

According to Ellis (1985), the process of language use should be understood in terms of the distinction between linguistic knowledge or rules (competence) and the ability to make use of this knowledge or procedures as capacity. Krashen's (1982) "linguistic competence" has thus been widened in Ellis' model to include "appropriate" use, as well as correct use (communicative competence).

Finally, language acquisition in either first or second languages is the result of our capacity to make sense. New rules are created when we endeavor to use existing knowledge in relation to the linguistic and situational context in order to create shared frames of reference (Ellis, 1985).

Oral Development in a Second Language

What is the role of speech in second language acquisition? According to Krashen (1983), we acquire spoken fluency not by practicing talking but by understanding input through listening and reading. Output has only an indirect contribution to make because the more you talk, the more people will talk to you. Speaking affects the quantity and quality of input people direct at you.

Like the speech a mother uses with her child in a first language called 'motherese,' there is another type of verbal interaction which occurs when a native speaker and second language learner converse (Ellis, 1985). So-called 'foreigner' speech by the native speaker is another adjustment like 'motherese' that is made when language is simplified in order to communicate. Motherese, foreigner talk, and 'pidgins' are thought to be the result of a single underlying process of language acquisition. Again, we see the agreement in principle with Spolsky (1988) for a single process of first or second language acquisition.

Factors that may have direct or indirect effects on the model are the sociolinguistic situation, the general exposure of learners to other languages, the roles of the target language and other languages in the outside community and in the home, and the general perception of the value of the target language and of bilingualism. It is for this reason that Spolsky (1988) suggests an eclectic approach and a variety of teaching strategies that address these differences in goals and uses to which the second language will be put.

Schumann's Acculturation Hypothesis

Schumann's hypothesis (1978) maintains that acculturation is the major causal variable in second language acquisition. Second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which the learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the target language. Any learner can be placed on a continuum that ranges from social and psychological distance to social and psychological proximity with speakers of the target language. According to Schumann (1978), the learner will acquire the second language only to the degree that he acculturates.

Among the social variables is the relationship between two social groups who are in a contact situation but speak different languages. "Social dominance" patterns will determine if the second language group will learn the target language. Colonists, for instance, would have been less inclined to learn the language of the country they have occupied.

Various integration strategies are also postulated by Schumann. If the second language group "assimilates," it gives up its own life style and values and adopts those of the target language group. However, if the second language group is "cohesive" or chooses "preservation," it maintains its own life style and rejects those of the target language group.

If the two groups have positive attitudes toward each other and share the same churches, schools and clubs, "enclosure" is low and contact is enhanced. "Congruence" or similarity between the two cultures affects the degree of social contact (Schumann, 1978). Intended length of residence is the final social factor which promotes second language learning, according to Schumann.

It is Schumann's affective variables of culture shock, language shock and motivation relating to language learning by individuals that are most important to this study. "Language shock" affects adults more than children when they are learning a second language in that adults fear criticism and ridicule, while children see language as a method of play. Adults also fear that their words may not actually reflect their ideas.

"Culture shock" results from the anxiety and disorientation when an individual enters a new culture (Schumann, 1978). The learner becomes dependent and his/her coping strategies may no longer work. His/her mental state can produce rejection of himself/herself, his/her culture, and the people of the host country.

The third affective factor, "motivation," involves the reasons for acquiring a second language. Gardner and

Lambert (1972) have identified two motivations: integrative and instrumental. An instrumentally-oriented learner is one who has little interest in the people who speak the target language, but wants to learn the language for more utilitarian reasons, such as improving his career. On the other hand, an integratively-oriented learner wants to learn the language in order to become like speakers of the target language.

The existence of important affective variables in second language learning is widely recognized. A description of a really serious student of a foreign or second language was given by Lambert and Gardner (1972, p. 275). "He/she has an open, inquisitive, and unprejudiced orientation toward the learning task and will find himself/herself becoming an acculturated member of a new linguistic and cultural community as he/she develops a mastery of that other group's language."

An intriguing hypothesis about the role of affect that can be applied in explaining a second language learner's ability to pronounce words in English after the age of puberty is to be found in Guiora's (1972) study on "ego-permeability." He reasons that in the early stages of development, language ego boundaries are permeable, but later become fixed and rigid due to heightened levels of inhibition. Guiora's (1972) experiments using alcohol on second language subjects resulted in their pronunciation being improved. Thus, it was reasoned that the successful adult second-language learner may have access to more child-like ego states.

Lambert and Gardner (1972) also regarded the question of learner orientation and the process of becoming or not becoming acculturated to the target language culture as central to research concerning factors in second language acquisition. "It is our belief that since language and language learning are always embedded within social contexts, second language acquisition must always involve variables of an affective nature whether these variable are explicity recognized or not" (p. 2).

Second-language competence

Because of Schumann's hypothesis and that of other researchers, the notion of second-language competence should go beyond a study of linguistic devices. While students need to acquire knowledge of the rule-bound system that exists at the discourse level, a knowledge of the pragmatics of the language enables the learner to use strategies of social interaction and language appropriate for a particular context.

Strategies of second language learners

Abraham and Vann (1987) studied the strategies of successful and unsuccessful college-aged students trying to pass the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). They chose two learners as a case study. The successful student, interestingly enough, was more concerned with form than his classmate. In the think-alouds, he monitored and checked over his work. He tried to use new rules of grammar to improve his speaking and writing. The successful student used a greater variety of strategies and matched his choice of strategy to the demands of the task. He also showed flexibility in his use of time. This showed a belief that language learning requires attention to both function and form, the latter including vocabulary, morphology, and grammar.

The successful student knew that he had to discover how the forms enable a person to communicate and recognized that they should be used with precision in an academic setting. Abraham and Vann (1987) concluded that a combination of maturity in learning and intelligence disposed the successful student to take this approach to language learning. Whether my case study subject met these characteristics of the successful student will be discussed, as well as the affective factors involved in his second language acquisition.

In Chamot's study (1987), intermediate level students reported using metacognitive strategies more frequently than did beginning level students. This probably indicates that a certain basic second language proficiency may be a precondition for students to be able to reflect on their own learning style and compare their own output to that of a native speaker. Krashen (1982) also found that monitoring is used primarily by students who have had greater exposure to the new language.

The students' degree of metalinguistic awareness indicated an ability to compare their first language to their second, to transfer linguistic knowledge and to evaluate their degree of success in using the new language (Chamot, 1987). They were aware of paralinguistic factors and style and register differences. They were also aware of the limitations of translation. Perhaps not too surprisingly, both beginning and intermediate level students favored repetition as the most frequently used strategy.

Differences Between Writing and Oral Expression

Why had my case study subject experienced so much difficulty in producing written compositions in his second language despite his positive attitude, high motivation and excellent verbal skills? What might have accounted for his writer's block? Is there so much of a difference between writing and speaking in a second language?

Some psycholinguists like Goodman (1979) and Cummins (1983) believe writing is more decontextualized than is oral language. It is for this reason that Cummins (1983) and Shuy (1978) have warned against only using oral expression as a gauge for language proficiency. In fact, Lambert (1975) found that among immigrant students in Canada it took nearly ten years to reach a level of language proficiency required for decontextualized academic written work. Oral discourse is the major form of assessment currently being used in the Language Institute.

Discourse Analysis

Stubbs (1980) has discussed the ambivalence among theorists about whether oral or written language has primacy in modern society. While oral language historically and chronologically predates written language, the advent of written language has also had an impact on how people speak, as well as how we evaluate the quality of oral discourse.

Since placement in Levels I through V in the Language Institute is primarily based on the student's oral interview (see Appendix), it is important that criteria appropriate for examining oral language is distinguished from criteria more appropriate to the evaluation of written language. On the surface, adults tend to presume higher levels of proficiency for language which is similar in form to that used in decontextualized written texts.

Oral language assessment must take place in a meaningful communication context where normal communicative cues are provided (Slaughter,1988). The various aspects of communication cannot be understood in isolation from one another because these features are not separate cues in meaning. Thus, a measurement in which the student's communicative competencies could be evaluated on the basis of the way speaking and listening function in ordinary social contexts has been devised.

What was the rationale behind the use of the Oral Interview adapted from the Foreign Service Institute for placement by the Language Institute? Since the paradigm used as the basis of their curriculum was audio-lingual, it was natural that a student's ability to hear a speaker and to respond correctly was the primary concern for placement into Levels I through V.

Because the contribution of the native speaker and the second language learner or foreigner do affect each other, the joint work that is done during the discourse is assessed. The physical situation, the linguistic context (the way something that is said relates to what was said previously), and the social context (the social meaning of the communicative situation for the participants) are factors which impact on all oral interactions and which are the basis for the oral assessment (Slaughter, 1988).

Many recent studies have argued that the cognitive processes involved in writing are qualitatively different from those involved in speech. For example, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982, 1983) concluded that the oral language production system cannot be carried over intact into written composition, but must be reconstructed to function autonomously instead of interactively.

Other researchers have even suggested that written expression is not only different, but more demanding than other skill areas. According to Wells (1981), the creation of written text is more cognitively and linguistically demanding than reading comprehension. Only writing requires the assembling of relevant meanings in a manner appropriate to the genre and purpose of writing, tailoring those meanings to the background and expectations of the reader, and encoding these meanings in language forms that clearly, grammatically, cohesively and elegantly convey one's message. Differences in the oral and written productions by my case study subject are an important area of investigation in my research.

Writing is an enormously complex task demanding the use of four types of knowledge: Knowledge of the content to be written about; procedural knowledge, knowledge of discourse structures; and the procedural knowledge which enables the production of a piece of writing of a particular type. The processes of composing are hierarchically related and recursive, requiring a review of what has already been written and a return to higher level processes (Hillocks, 1987).

According to Hillocks (1987), " writers who first focus on the final form of discourse and try to produce its parts short circuit the normal generating processes and become mired in an unmanageable task which blocks writing" (p. 4). In other words, knowing the rules of grammar or being able to identify the characteristics of a piece of writing is quite different than actually producing it.

Functions of Writing

According to Kirby and Kantor, one of the most appropriate models for understanding writing development is that of Britton et al.(1975) in which are described the functions of writing. It begins with the expressive (personal experiences) from which flows the transactional (getting things done) and poetic (reflecting on reality) types of discourse.

Developmental rhetoric

Kirby and Kantor (1983) have even suggested that among first language students there may not be some who are not developmentally ready to produce the traditional rhetorical products which are based primarily on adult prose. A growth model was needed, so they formulated a developmental rhetoric describing the signs of growth in first language written expression.

In their research, Kirby and Kantor added five more variables to those of Britton which they believed to be developmentally significant. Fluency includes syntactic fluency in oral and written discourse, while oral fluency focusses on the production process. Fluency also involves vocabulary content, vocabulary fluency and syntactic fluency.

Kirby and Kantor describe the state of being fluent in first language writing as the ability to produce written language with ease, employing developmentally appropriate lexical and syntactic structures with a growing sense of self-confidence. On the other hand, during more immature stages of development, the lack of fluency is reflected in halting and blocked expression. Might such a lack of fluency demonstrating an immature stage of their writing development produce the same sort of blocked expression for second language writers?

The second factor, involvement, reflects engagement in the writing task itself. At immature stages the writing will appear either reactive and subjective or perfunctory and detached, while at mature levels writing becomes more tempered between reason and passion. Might a lack of involvement be another possible cause for my case study's writing block and/or perfunctory efforts when the assigned topic did not actively involve him?

The third factor, invention, refers to creativity and imagination, reconciling inner experience with knowledge of the outside world. When creativity is encouraged, will a greater sense of involvement result? Thus, Kirby and

Kantor's first language writing factors might be applied equally to second language writing.

The fourth factor is command of function or being able to coordinate the modes of discourse for the purpose of establishing one's intent. Sense of audience is the fifth aspect of their theory in which there is a movement from concern for self to awareness of others' points of view. It would appear that these signs of growth in written expression could provide a model for instructional strategies for both first and second language writing.

Second Language Writing Instruction

The tradition of separating speaking and writing in second language instruction was influenced by structural linguists because spoken language was regarded as of primary importance (Mangelsdorf, 1989). Versions of the direct method, such as Krashen's natural approach, stress oral language acquisiton because of theories about the way children acquire their first language and the fact that children learn to speak before they learn to write. Because of these influences, writing is often introduced in the later stages of instruction as a way of reinforcing what was taught in the speaking classroom.

Fortunately, early writing is now being encouraged among younger second language students (Chomsky, 1970; Edelsky, 1983; Urzua, 1987; Nathenson-Mejia, 1989).

Although they are not yet even writing in their first languages, second language learners can write in their second language, even employing invented spelling (Hudelson, 1984).

Increases in self-concept and gains in reading comprehension have resulted (Flores, 1982). Since these particular students' first language was Spanish, they were able to abstract the knowledge that letters map to sounds in both of their alphabetic languages through such early writing, much as Read's students (1971) in his landmark research had done earlier in their first language.

In many classrooms, ESL teachers prepare students to write through invention, encourage several drafts of a paper, and delay the student fixation with and correction of sentence-level errors until the final editing stage.

A whole-language approach

The usual picture that arises when we speak of whole language is a literature-based curriculum. However, Newman and Church (1990) capitalize on opportunities based on their own students' interests outside the classroom. Multiple texts and genres can be utilized at the same time. Both oral and written language can be used to extend their learning.

Whole language teachers operate on the principle that learning occurs when students see a purpose for their activites. Rather than making assignments, teachers offer students invitations to read and write. As a result, students gain ownership of the reading and writing processes. They elect to read and write for their own purposes, not simply to satisfy a requirment imposed by the teacher. What they produce is authentic writing (Edelsy, 1985) that serves a number of different persnal and social purposes.

Using a Vygotskian perspective, teachers pose questions, suggest explorations and gently push students beyond their current strategies and understanding. Students are encouraged to suggest alternative strategies or new directions for themselves, merging students' interests with overall instructional goals and creating a flexible, but comprehensive curriculum.

Community language learning

These methods are strikingly similar to some of the methods currently being used for second language teaching, such as Community Language Learning where students are considered as 'whole persons' (Doggett, 1986). Recognizing that learning can be threatening, teachers understand and accept students' fears, help them feel secure and harness their positive energy for learning (Curran, 1976).

Corrections of dialect and second language pronunciation of English are kept to a minimum so as not to increase the students' affective filter (Krashen, 1983).

Some studies even suggest that it may be better to concentrate on written English rather than the spoken, since the primary function of language is to communicate (Delpit, 1990).

Moore (1990) has also described a whole language approach to the teaching of bilingual learners to counter the decontextualized language work being offered by ESL teachers. He was intrigued by a student from Bangladesh whose background did not allow himself to put much value into made up stories; his stories always had to have a moral ending. These heavily formulaic fairy-story-style moral tales were clearly translations of stories he had learned by rote in his native tongue.

Moore tried to find an explanation to this phenomenon that was rational and non-deficit in tone. To a writer like his student, background detail would seem superfluous. Things we value in our culture such as realism and naturalism could be thought of poorly in a culture that was less literacy-oriented. Moore found that their narratives would be essentially additive, associated with a more oral culture rather than the subordinate style favored by our own society.

Contrastive Analysis

The study of contrastive analysis was rooted in the need to teach a second language in the most efficient way possible (Ellis, 1985). The teacher who makes a comparison of the foreign language of the student with his native language would presumably be able to predict what the problems would be in the student's second language and be able to prevent errors from occurring.

It was interesting to learn that historically grammar was to prepare one to study a second language. It taught the principles of correctness or error avoidance in language usage. The functional grammarians of the 30's argued that grammar's purpose was corrective. However, research proved that overt rule learning is less successful in changing language behavior than repetitive oral·drills. Perhaps this explains the popularity of the audio-lingual method of second language instruction.

Second language college-level writing

Have the results of this research into second language acquisition also been utilized at the college level? A survey by Kroll (1970) found that faculty ranked the receptive skills of reading and listening rather than writing as the most essential for their second language college students. The students themselves believed that reading texts and taking notes were the skills they needed most, with graduate students reporting a greater need for writing and speaking (Christison and Krahnke, 1986).

Hudelson (1984) reported that second language literacy is dominated by procedures that strictly control writing. Language skills are hierarchically sequenced so that writing is reduced to a limited range of exercises and activities. My case study subject described many of his writing assignments as mere exercises.

The expectations of second language teachers and their students may not always coincide, so that there is often a mis-match. Mohan and Lo (1985) found that Chinese students composing in English felt that the teacher valued correct grammatical expression more than organizational form.

Reid (1989) reported that the problem of communicating successfully originates from the second language student's limited perception of what is expected from his university professors. They operate with a different set of cultural assumptions which are inappropriate for the expectations of the U.S. academic audience.

Their compositions may be highly philosophical and generalized, instead of being specific and personalized. Elaborate language and irrelevant materials may not address the point of the essay. While the U.S. academic audience expects specific strategies and formats, they do not intend to change the ways their students from other cultures think, according to Reid (1989).

In the written compositions, focussing on contrasting cohesive ties and textual and global cohesion shows that the second language writer connects his ideas differently than does a first language writer (Land and Whitley, 1989). A reader with Standard Written English (SWE) expectations may not recognize the signposts left by the second language writer, since many use a few distantly separated cohesive ties as a way of establishing coherence.

How are second language students instructed before they enter regular college composition courses? Traditionally the goal has been to have students acquire enough facility with Standard English Writing (SEW) to succeed in school and in the workplace.

However, Land and Whitley (1989) believe that the goal which prevalent methods of evaluating writing appears to be is for second language students to become entirely fluent in English. Unlike Reid (1989), Land and Whitley (1989) suggest an appreciation for cultural differences in rhetorical patterns rather than an effort to change them into a more linear Western rhetorical discourse model.

The distinct world views of the first language rhetorical communities from which our students come influence members' thoughts, actions and consequently their patterns of communication for many generations. To encourage new arrivals to this country to adhere to our rhetorical conventions may reduce the variety and strength that can only come with incorporating different rhetorical styles and the cultures which they represent.

Unfortunately, many second language teachers still approach students' texts as final products, rhetorical forms, and uniform standards (Zamel, 1987). Viewing themselves primarily as language teachers, they attend to surface-level features of writing and seem to read and react to a text as a series of separate pieces at the sentence or clause level rather than as a whole unit of discourse.

Teaching and learning ESL composition spreads over two huge fields: composing and second language acquisition. Composition theory and research are almost exclusively devoted to examining the products and processes of native-speaker writers, skilled and unskilled (Raimes, 1983, p. 259).

In described composing processes of the first language student, Emig (1971) noted the worries they had over peripherals such as spelling, punctuation and length. Raimes (1983) has also observed the anguish of her ESL students as they attempted to write in a second language. "ESL student writers have all of the worries of the native speaker and many more for they have to acquire the phonology, grammar, syntactic structure, vocabulary, rhetorical structure, and idiom of a new language in addition to learning the mechanics of prose" (p. 259).

With so much to be done, many ESL composition courses have stressed the acquisition of the rule-governed forms of the second language. "Grammar is the one part of writing that can be straightforwardly taught" (Elbow, 1973, p. 138). They have emphasized syntactic and rhetorical structure and assigned controlled compositions (Raimes).

"So we have provided controls and limits which make the task easier for us....We have...trapped our students within the sentence. They worry about accuracy; they stop after each sentence and go back and check it for inflections, word order, spelling and punctuation" (Raimes, p. 260). In my composing process analysis, this kind of behavior will be described.

"Our emphasis on patterns ...has reinforced the restraints. Students begin with a given topic sentence and thus lock themselves into a semantic and rhetorical prison. This first sentence restricts them before they have begun to develop their ideas" (p. 261).

Zamel (1982) agrees with Raimes when she points out that inordinate attention to form in second language writing leads to continued disruptions of the writer's discovery process. This in turn leads to writer's block and eventually to high writing apprehension (HWA). Might the emphasis on correctness in the Language Institute have caused the high anxiety and Sasha's reluctance to write in his second language?

Teacher feedback

Studies have shown that good writers revised more than poor writers and good writers revised content more than form (Perl, 1979; Sommers, 1980; Faigley and Witte, 1981). This is in contrast to Hillocks (1986) who found that teacher feedback has little effect.

Second language research on composition has also focused on how teachers correct form and respond to content (Fathman and Whalley, 1990). Here also the results are inconclusive; focus on form appears to help some students write better, but not others.

There are even fewer studies on content feedback, according to Zamel (1985). She found that ESL teachers are like L1 teachers in that their comments on content are vague and contradictory. Perhaps this is the reason students tended to respond to comments on form, but not on content.

In addition, Mellon (1969) asserted that the research by Milligan (1939) and Harris (1962) seemed to show that grammar does not promote growth of sentence structure, but that it actually appeared to retard or constrain it by such an emphasis on error-oriented pedagogy.

To see if any difference exists between levels of writing anxiety of native and second language learners, Gungle and Taylor (1989) composed a test on second language writing apprehension which is very similar to the one I have developed on perceptions of second language students of their writing development (See Appendix C).

The results of Gungle and Taylor's study (1989) showed a negative correlation between concern for content and ideas with writing apprehension, but no significant positive correlation with concern for grammar and form. However, students who indicated they are most concerned with content and ideas when they write were also most concerned with grammar and form.

Writing Topics

Reid (1990) wanted to know the impact of topic task on writers' responses in the assessment process. Using a computer text-analysis program, she found that different topic tasks administered to writers with different language and cultural backgrounds elicited responses that are linguistically measurable and measurably different. Essay length (total words) often indicated development within paragraphs, structural completeness and fluency.

Transfer of Writing Skills

Lastly, a body of research suggests that writing skills do not always transfer smoothly from one language to another. However, Valdes et al. (1992) found evidence to suggest that students do tranfer to their second language concepts such as organization, cohesion, unity of topic, etc., which they have acquired in their first language. They postulated that if students were allowed to write spontaneously without concern for mechanical accuracy, they would use all the resources they have in their first language plus the knowledge they have acquired in the target language in order to communicate real meanings.

Results of their study of Spanish language students indicated that student do not begin at ground zero when they attempt to write in their target language, but build directly on the abilities they had acquired for writing in English. There were clear differences in the sophistication and complexity of the writing products produced by students enrolled at different levels of foreign language study.

This suggested to them that the development of target language proficiency interacts with writing skills developed in a first language. There may also be a clear relationship between writing in a first and writing in a second language, especially when the two languages share both an alphabetic writing system and follow generally similar discourse conventions.

Some bilinguals may even choose to do certain types of writing in their first language and other types in their second language. Friedlander (1990) suggests that more proficient writers utilize their first languages in planning. Enhanced performance resulted when subjects generated their plans using the language in which they had acquired the knowledge.

Canale, Frenette and Belanger (1988) evaluated minority student writing in first and second languages and found that the strength of this relationship varies according to method of scoring; holistic or analytical. Moreover, different topics, different genres, presentation of tasks, and time allowed on task may influence the relationship between writing in a first and second language.

For example, what strategies does the learner seem to be using to assimilate the rules of the second language? Does he overgeneralize tense or plural rules as some first language learners do (Shaughnessey, 1987)?

Although an emphasis on error avoidance may be detrimental to the writer, the analysis of errors during the writing process can be a useful tool when it is considered apart from actual writing instruction. This focus elevates the status of errors from something that is undesirable to that of a guide to the inner workings of the language learning process.

Syntactic Maturity

The research on first language speaking and writing has been reviewed by McCarthy (1954) and Carroll (1960). Surprisingly research on speech has actually produced more construction-count data than has writing research. For instance, Harrell (1957) found that the number of subordinate clauses increases with age in both, but that these clauses are longer in oral composition through grade eight, after which they become longer in the written ones. Moreover, variability of clause length at all grade levels in greater in writing than in speech, according to Mellon (1969).

Loban (1963) found that during the first seven years of schooling, the subjects of his study spoke more words in each succeeding year of measurement. They also increased the number of communication units [comparable to T-units described below] and the average number of words spoken in each of those communication units.

Members of his high group used more communication units than did members of the low group while through subordination [described below], they are reducing the number of units they need for expression. Even so, they produce more units than the low group.

Those who are high in general language ability (the high group) were also high in reading ability. In addition, the gap between the high and the low groups widens year to year.

On an index of subordination, the high group uses this grammatical complexity to a greater extent than the random and low groups. All three groups show an increasing use of subordination as chornological age increases.

Of great interest are Loban's findings that reading, writing, listening, and speaking show a positive relation. The subjects in the lowest and highest quartiles in writing are also lower and higher in reading achievement. Those who write well in grade three also are above average in speaking and reading. Those who rate in the highest group in oral proficiency are also those who are completely above the median in reading for the random and low groups.

T-unit

Are there objective measures that have been used as measures of attained writing proficiency in a first language? Hunt (1965) described the T-unit as a minimal terminable unit; minimal as to length, and each would be grammatically capable of being terminated with capital letter (at one end) and a period (at the other). It has also been defined as any main clause with all of tis modifying phrases.

Subordination ratio

Hunt (1964) developed a subordination ratio for first language learners which is determined by adding the total number of clauses per T-unit and dividing by the number of T-units. The subordination ratio, like the number of T-units, increases as the students increase in age and syntactic maturity. However, Hunt (1964) insisted that T-unit length is a more accurate index of maturity than are subordination ratios or length of orthographic sentence.

In their studies (Mellon, 1969 and O'Hare,1971) found that words per T-unit and clauses per T-unit were both valid measures of syntactic maturity. Hunt (1964) found that the average eight grader wrote 11.5 words per T-unit, 1.42 clauses per T-unit, and 8.1 words per clause. Adults, on the other hand, write two and one-third fewer T-units per given number of words than do young children. The hallmark of mature syntactic fluency, according to Hunt (1964), is the ability to 'say more,' with every statement.

According to Mellon (1969), growth of syntactic fluency can result only from increased use of sentence-embedding transformations. Developmentally, Mellon (1969) noted that "the range of sentence types in free student writing increases in a continuous and sequential manner as the student matures. Thus, independent clauses grow longer, sentences become more highly elaborated, more subordination is used, a wider range of sentence patterns is employed and sentences become on average more heavily and deeply embedded" (p. 15).

> Growth of sentence structure is evidence that the student, through gaining greater experience in the world around him, has learned to construe and take cognizance of this world and of his relation to it in an increasingly adult manner. It is this cognitive growth that results in his making fuller use of permitted grammatical operations (Mellon, p. 15).

O'Hare (1971) demonstrated that sentence-combining exercises could reduce the time for eighth graders to reach the level of syntactic maturity exhibited by twelfth graders. He also found that words per T-unit is the most reliable single index of syntactic maturity, yielding the highest t-value of all six factors he considered.

What about the second language writer? According to Kameen (1983), T-unit length and clause length are also useful for studying syntactic maturity for second language writers. "T-unit length and clause length appear to be much more reliable indexes of rated quality than the time-honored index of sentence length.

T-unit length, especially incidence of long T-units (21+ words), is a powerful index for differentiating between the writing of 'good' and 'poor' college-level ESL writers (Kameen, 1983). 'Good' writers wrote approximately 29 per cent more words in each T-unit, writing an average of 18.40 words/t-unit as opposed to 14.30 for 'poor' writers.

Whether or not mean T-unit length is a stable individual trait within informative texts developed in different ways was also a question asked by Witte and Davis (1983). They found that for the particular writing samples they examined, mean T-unit length was a stable group characteristic, as well as individual characteristic. The importance of the implications for composition teaching and research that come from this study arises from the fact that mean T-unit length is so widely used as a measure of writing abilities in pedagogical and developmental research.

Nevertheless, Witte and Davis (1983) strongly suggest that for writers who are either inexperienced or who have not regularly engaged in the act of writing, variation in mean T-unit length across repeated measures may be so great that one discourse sample will not yield an accurate indication of such writers' abilities to manipulate syntax in the texts they write. Analyzing the same writer's texts over time as has been done in my study should yield more accurate data than one sample could.

Witte and Davis (1983) look with skepticism at sentence-combining research such as was done by Mellon (1969) and O'Hare (1971), since pretest writing samples were often collected under the assumption that the students' mean T-unit lengths would not vary significantly from one writing sample to another.

"Unless it can be demonstrated that the mean T-unit lengths of groups used in developmental or normative and experimental research are shown not to differ significantly across discourse samples of the same kind, then generalizing from those samples must be a tenuous business" (Witte & Davis, p. 176).

Mean clause length found by Hunt (1965) to be the second most powerful indicator of syntactic maturity correlated signficantly with rated quality of writing among the college-level ESL writers in Kameen's (1983) study. He suggests that sentence-combining exercises can give 'poor' students practice in writing longer clauses and T-units by showing them how to reduce and consolidate larger and larger chunks of information into fewer but longer clauses. This will lead students in the direction of reduced redundancy and increased succinctness.

According to Perkins (1980), the T-unit has been successfully used in both L1 and L2 research. Thornhill (1969) found that the mean length of T-units was a useful measure of L2 development. Moreover, Gaies (1976) found that T-unit length discriminates among L2 learners at different levels of proficiency for ESL. Statistical counts of these syntactic factors may be used as one part of the overall procedure for properly placing second language composition students (Kameen, 1983).

The Communicative Approach

At the University of Leningrad for my first Reading Internship, the paradigm that they reportedly use for second language instruction was the Communicative Approach. In this approach, the need to teach effective communication rather than being correct linguistically is stressed. Function is emphasized over form as students work with authentic materials in small groups on communicative activities, during which time they receive practice in negotiating meaning (Doggett, 1986).

How did this compare to methods used in the U.S.? Might not the methods used have a direct impact on second language acquisition in the area of written expression?

Second language instruction in the U.S.

The teaching of second languages in the United States began in earnest only when our soldiers were being prepared for overseas duties (Paulson, 1980). Army language schools began using a method called 'audio-lingual.' This was a behavioristic paradigm where patterns of correct sentence structure were practiced until they became automatic. Reading and writing were not introduced until students had mastered the material orally (Ching, 1976). It is this model of instruction that is still primarily used in most language schools today, including the Language Institute at National-Louis University.

According to Ebel (1980), the population originally being taught English as a second language was made up of foreign students who were attending U.S. universities. They were primarily from upper middle-class homes, highly motivated and literate in their native languages. They had already developed skill in reading English, so the stress in ESL teaching was on listening and conversation. Not only that, but there was an attempt to protect students from the 'damaging' effects of contact with the written language (Ching, 1976).

This model exists to some degree today among second language instructors, so that reading and writing are not introduced for up to two years or not at all. In other words, language instruction has been taught as a subject in isolation from content areas.

Second language instruction in the Language Institute

Since it appeared from my Reading Internship that the audio-lingual method is the primary paradigm of instruction in the Language Institute (see Appendix), I wanted to know how much emphasis, if any, had been placed on reading and writing. What exactly is the audio-lingual method of second language instruction?

The Audio-Lingual Method

In the audio-lingual method, teachers model correct pronunciation and sentence structure. Students practice these sentences until they are able to produce the sounds and sequence of words correctly and automatically. According to Doggett (1986), the audio-lingual method is based on the behaviorist belief that language learning is the acquisition of a set of correct language habits.

Once a given pattern is learned, the speaker can substitute words to make novel sentences. The teacher directs and controls students' behavior, provides a model, and reinforces correct responses. An inference is made later in this case study about the role that the methods of teaching second languages may play in the development of oral and written expression among students at the college level.

I have described studies that primarily cover second language acquisition in the areas of speaking and writing. Since these are both productive rather than passive aspects of language, they are considered by some linguists to be more difficult than are listening and reading. Methods of analysis, such as error analysis and measures of syntactic maturity, are used to indicate growth and development in those areas.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

In my dissertation, I used the research-then-theory approach described by Ellis (1985). That is, I selected a phenomenon for investigation (second language oral expression and writing development), and compared the results to the different theories and research studies cited in my literature review. I then compared the results of my data with the theories of second language acquisition and instruction previously described.

The theory-then-research approach has provided an approximate answer and a basis for systematically testing aspects of the overall theory. However, in the study of second language acquisition, there is no agreed-upon theory to motivate an experimental hypothesis-testing approach (Ellis, 1985).

Data Collection

Analysis of Written Compositions

My basic approach was to carry out an interpretive case study of one college student from Ukraine as he learned and acquired a second language, English.

I analyzed all the written compositions he had completed over the course of two years at two different colleges, using methods of counting errors and also measuring syntactic maturity (Mellon,1969 and O'Hare,1971). I counted total words per composition and errors per 100 words for all of my case study's compositions over the course of two years (Chapter IV).

Three faculty members from National's English Department used the holistic 4-Pt. Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation which is also employed at National-Louis University to assess doctoral candidates' writing samples (Appendix C). Eight equally weighted general traits are evaluated: (1) written expression, (2) ideas, (3) organization, (4) sentence structure, (5) vocabulary use, (6) tone and feeling, (7) topic development, and (8) grammar and mechanics.

Two members of the English Department were later asked to evaluate representative samples of Sasha's writing from Levels I through IV of the Language Institute using a more discrete-point assessment device and the best-known scoring procedure for ESL writing, the ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs et al., 1981). (See Appendix C.) One member had formerly evaluated all the compositions using the Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation; the other was an additional English faculty member who used only the ESL Composition

Profile.

The ESL Composition Profile uses a scale with four steps to judge five different traits, each trait being differentially weighted, with scores reported both separately and in combination (Hamp-Lyons, 1990). These traits were: (1) content, (2) organization, (3) vocabulary, (4) language use, and (5) mechanics.

All faculty, regardless of the scale they used, were also asked to rank each composition. These were also compared to the case study subject's ranking of his own compositions (Chapter IV).

Interviews

To better understand possible causes for the errors, I interviewed my case study to determine the instruction which accompanied the assignments, any prewriting activities, the influence of topic, and other factors that may have been involved.

These were compared to his oral development during the same levels at the Language Institute. I had obtained tapes of the oral interviews of my subject conducted by the Language Institute before Level I, after Level III, and after Level V. I transcribed and analyzed them in the same way for errors and syntactic maturity to provide a comparison with my case study's written compositions at the same level at the Language Institute.

I conducted retrospective interviews with my case study on the composing process, his writing development, the instruction he had received at two institutions, and his comparison of the educational systems in Ukraine and the United States (Appendix B). He also critiqued and ranked his own compositions as to quality and sources of errors. The role of assigned topics and teacher responses was also critiqued and transcribed (Appendix B).

Using the Burke Oral Reading Interview to tape and transcribe his verbal responses, I was able to probe for the metacognitive processes my case study utilized during reading (Appendix A).

Interviews with Sasha's Level IV and V instructors were also conducted. In retrospect, these were extremely important not only for triangulation purposes, but also to better understand how teacher responses and instruction may have impacted Sasha's writing block and writing development.

Read-Alouds

Sasha read aloud sections dealing with the persecution of Russian-Jews in Ukraine from a biography of Shostakovich which he had selected so that I could better understand the culture he had come from. This was taped and transcribed (Appendix B).

The third type of read-aloud which was taped was correspondence in English I had received from Russia.

During the process, my case study was able to point out the problem areas for Russians who write in English; a form of contrastive error analysis (Appendix B) which is incorporated into my discussion.

Observations

To study my case study subject's writing process in a second language, I watched his composing and editing behavior as he was producing three compositions, two of which took up a great length of time (Chapter V). These observations were very illuminating both as to the second language writing process itself and to the role of the writer's personality, attitude and self-confidence.

As data was collected, further questions were raised in a recursive pattern (Erickson, 1986). When the data was transcribed and analyzed, future data collection was determined. As required for all interpretive studies, the written data in the form of transcripts of interviews, questionnaires, and summaries was shown to the subject for verification and accuracy, since it is his perspective that must be accurate, not that of the researcher (Spradley, 1979). However, the analyses of data were completely mine.

Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were given to the case study as well as to students in several classes of Communication

Development, one on reading activities and the second on writing development. Jung (1992) constructed a questionnaire for second language college-aged students to tap the metacognitive aspects of second language reading which I used. Horwitz (1994) developed a similar questionnaire to determine what beliefs second language students have about language learning.

Based on Jung's (1992) questionnaire, I developed another questionnaire focussing on second language writing development and students' perceptions of their anxieties, writing development and the second language instruction they have received (see Appendix C).

Because I was able to compare the results of both questionnaires with those of my case study, I was able to establish some general parameters of second language writing attitudes and processes for the same population of students (Tables 8 and 9). Not all items of the writing questionnaire were addressed; I used only those items which have evolved from my literature review as being especially significant variables for second language acquisition, such as age, previous second language instruction, writing anxiety, and goals of the students. Other items were analyzed as the evolving data indicated.

Procedures

My study was performed in two parts:

I. One case study to investigate the effect of acculturation, motivation, attitude, goals, anxiety, age, and instruction on second language acquisition, but also to answer in greater depth the following questions:

A. What is the relationship between oral and written expression in a second language?

B. What is the process in the writing development of a second language student?

C. What is the relationship between reading and writing in a second language?

D. What is the relationship between a subject's native language and culture and his second language acquisition?

Steps I followed:

1. I audiotaped and transcribed the following interviews with the case study:
    a. Early experiences in reading and writing in the first language.
    b. Second language instruction in the U.S., especially at NLU and Truman College
    c. Retrospective assessment of subject's written compositions, especially as to topics and methods of instruction.

        d. Assessment of subject's writing development using the Writing Questionnaire both during his Language Institute coursework and at Truman College.
        e. Oral critique of other Russian's correspondence.
    2. Interviews with several of the subject's former instructors from the Language Institute to triangulate my data.
    3. I analyzed all written compositions from Levels I through V of the Language Institute and from subsequent courses in writing at Truman College for errors and syntactical maturity.
    4. Sample compositions from each level were also assessed by outside readers from the English Department at NLU to provide further triangulation.
    5. The actual writing process involving revisions and editing by my case study was observed and described for several compositions.

II. Two surveys of second language college level students were conducted to explore the following questions:

A. How do second language students perceive themselves as readers and writers in their second language?

B. How do they evaluate the second language instruction they have received?

C. Where do students place their own second language development in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing?

D. How does my case study differ from the average second language college student who has completed the same program and at the same institute?

Methodological Issues

Communicative Competence

Key issues that arise in the assessment of communicative competency relate to maturational, age-related differences among student speakers. Cultural and experiential differences between adult examiners and students also create difficulties in establishing conversational topics of mutual interest. There is also the invisible context which refers to the assumptions shared or unshared among participants (Slaughter, 1988).

Of even greater interest for my study is the fact that skills in the usage of cohesive devices have been found to be minimal indicators of overall language proficiency, so that a student's ability to use conjunctions, pronouns, and articles correctly cannot be expected to reflect his communicative ability (Evola et. al., 1980).

> When global proficiency measures are used as validating criteria, the scoring system which totals correct usages seems to be a better indicator of language ability than systems which take into account the number of words produced, errors made, or obligatory contexts. Discrete-point analyses seem to reveal only narrow descriptions of potential communicative capacity and do not appear to be comprehensive indices of language proficiency" (Evola, 1980, p. 181).

T-units

Because Hunt's measures (1965) do not take errors into account for T-units nor morphological and transformational complexity, Flahive and Snow (1980) developed two additonal measures, both based on the T-unit. However, they did not find that these additional measures contributed to the predictive value for language placement. Of even greater interest is the fact that they did, however, find a correlation between the clause/T-unit ratio and holistic evaluations of written compositions.

On the other hand, Wilkinson (1983) found that the use of such traditional linguistic measures as counts of words or mean sentence length were only crude indicators of surface structure which do not take meaning into account. His contention was that an awareness of style and an advance in analytical ability could even decrease the variety of words and structures used on a particular occasion by a student when writing. Wilkinson constructed a model of writing development that also incorporated the areas of style, affect, cognition and morals for research purposes.

Error Analysis

Perkins (1980) concluded that objective measures which do not take the absence of errors into account are of no use in discriminating among holistic evaluations at advanced levels of proficiency. However, it must be recognized that even when a second language writer produces an error-free composition in English, a hidden agenda often leads the evaluator to find fault with other formal features (Purves, 1986).

Contrastive rhetoric

The most negative text feature are the student's patterns of organization established in rhetorical communities where the student has learned his/her native language. Hamp-Lyons (1989) found that essay readers responded to cultural differences in essays which was partially attributable to their experiential backgrounds and to their response to the students' linguistic/rhetorical backgrounds.

Vann, Lorenz, and Meyer (in press) found that faculty's responses to error in L2 writing could be partially attributed to their discipline and sex. Standard written

English (SWE) rhetorical conventions generally emphasize strong sentence-to-sentence connections which result in linear prose and a deductive logical arrangement.

It has been found that ESL writers connect their ideas differently than do native writers. To be truly 'fluent' a second language student would have to be able to produce essays in English that were not only grammatically and syntactically, but also rhetorically indistinguishable from those written by their American peers.

According to Evola, Mamer and Lantz (1980), skills in the use of cohesive devices are minimal indicators of overall language proficiency. "Furthermore, native language seems to play no role in ability to use cohesive devices except for possibly articles. When global proficiency measures are used as validating criteria, the scoring system which totals correct usages seems to be a better indicator of language ability than systems which take into account the number of words produced, errors made, or obligatory contexts" (p. 181).

Attitudes/motivation

Spolsky (1983) defined an integratively motivated second language learner as one who chooses as a reference group the second language group over the native language group. An integrative orientation toward the target language culture and a desire to become like valued members of that community has been seen to be more desirable than an instrumental orientation. This hypothesis that certain attitudes and motivations are apt to lead to higher levels of attainment in second language learning has grown in popularity. Nevertheless, Oller, Perkins and Murakami (1980), questioned the hypothesis that certain attitudes and motivations lead to higher levels of attainment in second language learning. They found that the degree of integrativeness of subjects is inconsistently related to scores on the language proficiency tests.

Measures of attitudes and motivation may themselves be surreptitious measures of language proficiency (Oller and Perkins, 1978). Lukmani (1972) found that the instrumentally motivated learners tended to outperform integratively motivated learners. Savignon (1972) has suggested that an integrative orientation could instead be the result rather than the cause of a superior performance in language learning.

Analysis of Writing Content

Nystrand (1982) speculated on three levels of functional relations characterizing the written language: 1) the graphic relations of legibility; 2) the syntactic and lexical relations of readability; and 3) the textual and contextual relations of lucidity. They are less aspects of the text, but more the result of meaningful match or convergence between writer and reader by way of a text.

> The logic or structure of the written language seems missed if the text itself is taken as the fundamental object of analysis or if text meaning is assessed apart form the context of its use. The fundamental object of written discourse analysis is not the text, but that system of rules that makes orthographic expression possible. When written communication occurs, readers find the text legible, readable, and lucid--in short, transparent. Unaware of text as text, they are 'absorbed' into the world of its meaning" (Nystrand, 1982, p. 72)

Theoretical Models

According to Vollmer (1983), there is a need for a greater variety of theoretical models of foreign language competence. It is no longer assumed that there is a general factor or unitary competence or a global, indivisible language processing device. Therefore, competing hypotheses about second language ability are no longer thought to be mutually exclusive, but rather complementary.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF ERRORS AND SYNTACTIC MATURITY

Error Analysis

Since correctness of grammatical form by repeated practice to the point of automaticity (the audio-lingual method) has been observed to be a major focus of instruction at the Language Institute of National-Louis University, I attempted to determine if this emphasis had any effect on Sasha's written work.

Correct production can give little information regarding interlanguage, the linguistic system that is created by and which lies between a learner's native and target languages as he/she is acquiring the forms of the second language. However, according to Brown (1987), an analysis of the errors made in the written productions of second language learners can help determine the process and underlying production competence of second language learners. Therefore, all of Sasha's compositions were analyzed for errors.

Syntactical maturity was another aspect of his written productions that was investigated using the statistical methods used by Hunt (1964), Mellon (1969), and O'Hare (1971). Total words, total T-units, Average words per T-units and Average clauses per T-units were measured.

Composition length for Sasha's written productions ranged from a low of 76 total words ("New Year's") in Level IV to 1080 words (Part II of "Person" also in Level IV) over the two years that this study covered. Thus, length of composition varied from topic to topic and level to level, but there was an obvious trend toward greater length at higher levels (see Table 1).

During Level I, the sentences were primarily descriptive and short, with the total number of words used ranging in the mid two-hundreds. One can note from the titles of the eight Level I compositions that each one begins with the word "my," indicating descriptive topics.

Counting errors per 100 words, however, can give an indication of writing development without having to account for differences in the length of the composition.
Errors ranged from a high of 16 per 100 words in Level I's "My city" to a low of 0.5 in "Recommendation." The latter composition was written while I was observing my subject and assisting him with some vocabulary choices.

When I compared compositions for all levels, errors dropped from a high averaging 13.0 per 100 words for Levels I and II to a low of 2.34 in Level VII. There was a decline of almost 50% between levels II and III and between

VI and VII. This low level of errors was maintained fairly consistently once Level VII was reached, as can be seen in the chart on errors and syntactic maturity (Table 1). The decline in number of errors indicates is one measure of writing development.

Syntactic Maturity

Length of T-unit and number of clauses per T-unit are both measures of syntactic maturity on the part of first and second language writers (Mellon, 1969) and O'Hare (1971). Therefore, not only were errors counted in Sasha's oral (Language Institute) and written productions (Language Institute and Truman College), but I determined the syntactic maturity for each by counting average number of words per T-unit and clauses per T-unit.

Average words per T-units is generally recognized as being the best indicator of syntactic maturity in either first (Hunt, 1965) or second language (Hamp-Lyons, 1990, Kameen, 1983). These ranged from a low of 6.34 in his first composition in Level I, "My Classmate," to a high of 28.35 in "Most Important Decision" in Level IV. There was a gradual rise in number of words per T-unit from Level I (9.1) to Level VI(23.13), after which it descended slightly in Level VII to 20.28. The largest leap occurred between Levels I and II when words per T-unit jumped from 9.1 in Level I to 15.45 in Level II.

Table 1

ERRORS/SYNTACTICAL MATURITY

Composition	Total words	Av.Errors/ 100 words	Av.Words/ T-units	Av.Cl/ T-units
Level I				
1.Classmate	222	8	6.34	1.17
2. Monday	275	12	10.18	1.81
3. Apartment	306	10	11.33	1.29
4. City	274	16	9.44	1.06
5. Family (mid-term)	267	15	7.85	1.20
6. Zhanna	293	12	10.46	1.50
7. Neighbor	187	12	11.00	1.58
8. Restaur.	247	9	8.82	1.18
Average	259	13	9.10	1.35
Level II				
1. Hometown**	575	14	16.91	1.67
2. Jerusalem	378	12	14.00	1.66
Average	476	13	15.45	1.66
Level III				
1. Helen	754	12.0	15.38	1.75
2. Typical	914	3.1	17.24	1.75
Average	834	7.5	16.31	1.75
Level IV				
1. New Year's	76	12.0	6.90	1.36

Table 1 (Continued)

	Total Words	Av.Err/ 100 Words	Av.Words T-units	Av.Cl./ T-units
2. Person I Remember**				
Part I	244	7.0	20.33	1.66
Part II	1080	6.7	18.00	1.78
Part III	640	9.0	16.41	1.71
Average		8.6		1.71
3. Composit.	1053	4.0	16.71	1.68
4. Decision	567	6.0	28.35	3.25
Average		6.5	19.76	2.01
Post-Level V				
1. Testim.* (think-aloud)	144	3.0	20.57	1.57
2. Recomm. * ** (process)	592	0.5	21.92	1.62
Level VI (Truman College)				
1. Why here? (in class)	99	3.0	24.75	2.75
2. Vietnam* (process)	607	2.0	26.39	1.95
3. Rosemary	441	2.1	21.00	2.42
4. Brownsville**	160	7.0	22.85	2.00
5. Final Exam I (in class)	496	6.0	20.66	2.33
Average		4.02	23.13	2.29
Level VII (Truman College)				
1. American Experience	174	2.0	19.30	1.77

Table 1 (continued)

	Total Words	Av.Err/ 100 words	Av.Words/ T-units	Av.Cl./ T-units
2. Sandwich** (in class)	305	2.66	19.25	1.62
3. Final Exam II** (in class)	870	2.37	22.3	1.90
Average		2.34	20.28	1.76

* Composed while I was observing my case study

**Topics enjoyed by subject

Hunt's (1965) Subordination Ratio, or clauses per T-unit, is another factor I measured for syntactic maturity. When the total average clauses per T-units was compared for every level, a trend upwards was seen from a low of 1.35 average number of clauses per T-unit in Level I to a high of 2.29 in Level VI. Like average words per T-unit, it dropped to 1.76 in Level VII, possibly due to the fact that Sasha's rhetorical style was becoming more like that of his American peers. According to Mellon (1969), saying more with fewer words is also a measure of syntactic maturity.

I had believed that the low of 8 errors per 100 words in his first composition, "My Classmate," was an outlier, especially because the sentences were unusually short and simple compared to his later work. This hypothesis was later confirmed in a retrospective interview with my case study (see Appendix B).

In that interview, Sasha admitted that he had not wanted to risk making errors and had deliberately chosen to write very short sentences. After all, the instructor had not wanted him to experiment, since her primary goal had been for her students to produce error-free compositions. A sample of Sasha's short sentences in his first composition in which he interviewed a classmate was as follows:

> My classmate is from China. His name is Jian Er Chen. He is Chinese. The name of his citi [sic] was? Kai Pan. It's a small citi. He come to USA two years ago. He (as I) lives in Chicago.

Such short sentences as appeared in "Classmate" were never seen again in any subsequent compositions by Sasha. Therefore, the average of 8 errors per 100 words might be considered to be an outlier based strictly on teacher expectations of error-free written productions.

What is truly unfortunate is that Sasha's first attempt to be creative in his very composition was literally stifled by his instructor. As seen in the first draft of "Classmate," Sasha began early in his writing development to try to produce more interesting and varied sentences. Sasha wanted to be creative and bring the reader along with him as he walked along Michigan Avenue to reach his classroom:

> Michigan Ave., building number 18, third floor, and over one minute I'm in the classroom. I see my teacher, Judith, my classmates and sit on the chair at the desk. My teacher offer me to talk with my classmate from China. Now, I'm begining [sic].

However, this draft was considered too "experimental" by his instructor and Sasha was forced to change his composition to a more traditional style:

> NLU is on Michigan Ave., my classroom is on the third floor, and over one minute I'm in the classroom.

In actuality, Sasha's teacher appeared to be more interested that correct English forms and word order be demonstrated than creativity. His attempts at individuality and self-expression in his second language were discouraged from the very beginning. It may be the reason that Sasha did not consider these compositions any more than exercises, except for "Zhanna," which will be discussed in a later section of this analysis.

Another composition produced during Level I, "Restaurant" had only a slightly higher error rate of 9.0 errors per 100 words, even though the sentences by the end of the quarter were longer than in his first composition.

> A lot of people, that go there (that restaurant) always not only eat, but enjoy their vacation. They forget their problems and thoughts. Some very beautiful waitress and waiters work there. They always give their customers lots of special attention, take good care of them and of food, which always fresh and delicious.

Errors increased after this first composition in Level I, as the sentences became longer and more complex, the total average for Level I being 13.0 errors per 100 words. Therefore, it might be said that Sasha was able to hold down the number of errors despite the fact that the sentences were longer.

Having to use certain verb tenses that have been learned in class would also have limited the quality of writing and the number of errors produced. In Level I, the TO BE verb, present continuous and simple present, along with basic pronouns were covered. The TO BE tense is introduced but unanalyzed. Simple past, past continuous, future and TO BE going to were not covered until Level II. Nevertheless, Sasha attempted to use the past tense, however incorrectly.

Composition #5, "My Family," served as a mid-term in-class examination. Since Sasha was expected to demonstrate his actual knowledge, he took care to write sentences he had previously produced in earlier compositions. The result was an error rate of 15 errors per 100 words, but a syntactic maturity of only 1.06 clauses per T-unit.

At 7.85 words per T-unit, "My family" had the next lowest number of words per T-unit after "Classmate." Since this was an in-class mid-term exam, Sasha later explained that he was careful not to use new sentences or phrases, but opted to write parts of old compositions. This explains the awkward flow of the paragraphs, since content was less important than correctness for his instructor.

> My family is from Ukraine. We come to the USA two monthes ago. It isn't fancy, but it is comfortable. It is our new home. There are four members on my family. My grandmother, my parents, and their child--I.

According to Sasha's retrospective interview (see Appendix B), despite the emphasis on error-free compositions in Level I, he had attempted, as befitted the topic of a very close friend, to write beyond his English expertise at the time he was composing "Zhanna." Thus, he had deliberately disregarded the need to be always correct grammatically in this composition.

Nevertheless, errors were only 12 per 100 words, but total average clauses per T-units measuring syntactic maturity was 1.50, much longer than the 1.20 rate evident in his more carefully controlled "Family" which had preceded it. "Zhanna" was also a take-home assignment, as was the case for all the compositions assigned in the Language Institute except for in-class examinations, such as "My family." Focus on grammar would appear to be less effective in producing error-free compositions than engagement with a topic of interest to the student.

"Apartment" had the longest number of words per T-unit of all the Level I compositions. Sasha was expected to use recently learned prepositions, such as "in front of" in this composition.

> In my grandmother's bedroom there is her bed, a closet, a small table, and another bed for me, because my grandmother is ill sometimes and I must be near her.

The number of clauses per T-unit in Level I ranged from a low of 1.17 in his first composition, "Classmate" to 1.81 in his second, "Monday's Schedule."

> I'm in class from eight-thirty to twelve-thirty. I study very hard and usually need a break, which I have for twenty or thirty minutes between the first and

> second parts of class. In the second part of class I usually have some tests, so my break is very importand [sic] for me.

What might have accounted for this large difference between his first and second compositions in Level I? According to his retrospective interviews, Sasha had already written on the topic of his schedule during a short stint of English instruction at a local temple. Therefore, he took the opportunity to be more creative in this second version of his schedule. Why had it been titled only "Monday's schedule?" It was the first day of the week and all the days were similar was Sasha's reply. However, his first and last compositions in Level I were nearly identical in syntactic maturity at 1.17 and 1.18 total average clauses per T-units respectively. It appears that syntactic maturity may take longer to achieve than producing error-free written compositions.

Beginning with the two compositions in Level II, there was a significant increase in the total number of words over those in Level I from 259 to 476. More interesting is the fact that both compositions were almost identical in the average number of errors per 100 words, with "My Home Town" having 14 and "Next Year in Jerusalem" having 12.

There was no difference in number of clauses per T-unit either, with "My Home Town" having 1.67 and "Next Year--in Jerusalem" with 1.66. Since "Home Town" was one of the few topics Shasha later reported as having liked, the lack of any difference is unusual. This consistency of errors and syntactic maturity within the same quarter may reflect that a certain stage in the writing development of my case study had been reached and that the stage was relatively stable.

With Level III, the compositions became even longer in length than those written in Levels I and II, nearly doubling from 476 to 834 words. Interestingly, average words per T-units for the two Level III compositions were identical at 1.75. However, a very significant difference in number of errors occurred between these two compositions, "Helen" having 12 errors, similar to the numbers in Levels I and II, but "Typical student," the second, having only 3.1 errors per 100 words. This level of "correctness" was not to be seen again until his compositions in Levels VI and VII at Truman College.

Because Sasha's level of errors had dropped so significantly in "Typical," I surmised that Sasha may have had some sort of model upon which to base his composition. On checking with Sasha later during a retrospective interview, it was determined that no model had been given by the instructor. The class was simply instructed to choose what each student was typical or not typical of, and to begin the composition with a dictionary definition of typicality of whatever the student had chosen to describe. Only in "Testimony" after Level V did Sasha have the same low number of errors as he had in "Typical."

Despite the fact that such progress was being made in Level III, Level IV was problematic for Sasha in that he was unable to produce the required number of composition assignments during the ten weeks of that quarter. Only one composition, "The New Year's Eve," was completed in the classroom under time constraints. Number of errors per 100 words was 12, just as was the case with "Helen," the first composition in Level III. "Helen" was also an emotionally-laden topic similar to "Zhanna" in which Sasha disregarded form over content as he was lamenting his lost country and culture. However, it must be noted that "New Year's Eve" was completed in class, while "Helen" was not, so we might expect it to have more errors than "Helen."

The other topics that were assigned for Level IV were: 1) How to do something, 2) An important person, and 3) Most important decision. The three additional compositions were written at the end of March, 1994 during the two-week Interim between Levels IV and V under extreme duress. That is, there was the threat of not being able to register for Level V after the Spring Break unless all three compositions were completed during the Interim.

Sasha chose his deceased grandfather as the subject of "An important person." Although the three parts of "The Person Whom I Remember" came to nearly 2000 words in length, it counted for only one assignment. Part I was 244 words in length, Part II 1080, and Part III 640. Errors per 100 words averaged 8.6 and clauses per T-unit were very consistent for each part, averaging 1.71. This is further evidence that Sasha made fewer errors when the focus was on meaning rather than correctness, as in "Zhanna."

Sasha reported to me that he was able to write this piece as a tribute to his beloved grandfather "for himself," not the teacher. He clearly stated that he had needed a purpose in order to write; this ownership of the topic also appeared to be correlated with lower numbers of errors.

Part III (640 words) was an alternative to Part II and was written, according to Sasha, when his mood had been darker. In contrast to Part III, Part II ends on a lighter and more optimistic note. Because the Interim was nearing an end and two more compositions were being required of Sasha, he was unable to refine Part III and was, therefore, required to end "Person" with Part II. A more descriptive account of this composition will be given under "Content Analysis" in Chapter V.

"Important decision," also written in Level IV, was especially important for the average clauses per T-unit it contained. Standing at 3.25 clauses per T-unit, it was the highest in syntactic maturity of any composition written to date. Causes and their effects, caveats, and decisions resulting from having to make choices may have contributed to this extremely high subordination rate. Although in terms of syntactic maturity "Decision" ranks at the very top, when outside readers assessed this composition, it was never ranked first. It is not surprising that their scores did not correlate, since other features of writing were being assessed.

What is most remarkable is the fact that Sasha had objected to his instructor and in his interviews that this topic, "Most important decision" had been too premature in his life. How was one to know what was the most important decision when he was only 21 years of age?

The errors in two compositions, "Testimony" and "Recommendation" written after Level V had ended and before entering Truman can also be included in an error count, although they were composed while I was observing and providing some vocabulary choices for Sasha. Keeping this in mind, "Testimony" had 3 errors and "Recommendation" only 0.5 errors per 100 words. The average clauses per T-unit for "Testimony" and "Recommendation" were quite similar at 1.57 and 1.62 respectively. This would tend to confirm the contention that syntactic maturity is characteristic of an individual and does not vary according to topic.

This is another indication that Sasha's writing development was seemingly proceeding at a glacial pace, as described in Hunt's study (1965). Moreover, it appears to refute Witte and Davis' (1983) contention that variation in mean T-unit length across repeated measures may be so great that an accurate indication of such writers' abilities to manipute syntax in the texts they write will be impossible.

The slightly higher average syntactic maturity of Level IV at 2.01 clauses per T-unit may have resulted from the exceptionally high rate of syntactic maturity displayed in "Decision," which may also be considered an outlier. However, the topic itself may have demanded more conditional sentences, such as those below:

> There is an opinion among immigrants that the most valuable thing for us, people who actually begin a new life is moral support, not even financial support, but simply encouragement. There wasn't such a question for me, "Should I or should I not?" since I had always been sure that I had to, and when we have to, we hardly ever have choices.

His first composition at Truman in Level VI, "Why are you here," was 99 words long and was composed in class. Despite this fact, there were only 3 errors per 100 words. This may be explained by the fact that we have seen that Sasha was more careful with in-class assignments.

More importantly, average clauses per T-units was 2.75, the highest he would reach in Level VI. Perhaps having written on similar topics before at the Language Institute, Sasha was able to use them as pre-writing exercises as he had done with "Monday's Schedule" and experiment further with the topic.

Except for the first paragraph which Sasha had written in Russian at home, "Vietnam" was also composed as I observed Sasha. Therefore, that fact must be kept in mind when considering that there were only 2.0 errors per 100 words in this composition. Average clauses per T-unit at 1.95 was lower than his other Level VI compositions. This may be explained in part by the fact that the topic was essentially a narrative description of an incident viewed in class on videotape. He had explained to me during the composing process that, "you will see everything in detail from what I saw on the video."

Clauses per T-unit in "Vietnam" was almost identical to the number (2.00) found in a subsequent composition entitled, "Brownsville" produced during the same semester at Truman College. Like "Vietnam," "Brownsville" was a descriptive narrative. Errors were 7 per 100 words, the largest in Level VI. As preparation for this assignment, the instructor had given each student a cartoon-like strip of pictures describing the changes in a rural town as it became urbanized. Students were to create a story explaining the reasons for the changes.

Because both compositions were chronological in organizational style, the topic may have dictated a rhetorical style that requires less embedding. This may explain why these two compositions were lower in clauses per T-unit than the other three written during Level VI. Sasha later explained that he was not interested in this topic at all.

Among several goals for writing students at Truman College were: 1) separating writing into correct paragraphs,

2) connecting short sentences into long ones, and 3) making things more specific. The paragraph below which was supplied by the instructor was to be made to "sound more adult" by combining the sentences. The theme again was immigration.

> I came to this country on my honeymoon. My son was born here. He is in a special school. I was a volunteer there. Now i work as a bus monitor. The principal of the school offered me a job as a teacher assistant, full time. For that job, I need 30 college credits. So in order to get that job, I registered at Truman College. That is the reason I am here.

Sasha's efforts at combining sentences proceeded in three steps:

1. The reason why I'm at Truman College is the possibility for me to work full time as a teacher assistant at my son's school. In order to get the job I, firstly, had to voluntee there, and now need 30 college credits.

2. I came to this country on my honeymoon and, later, gave birth to my son, who is now in a special school, where I, first, worked as a volunteer and, now, as a bus monitor.
   Recently, the principal of the scool [sic] has offered me a full time job as a teacher assistant for wich [sic] I need 30 credit hours.

3. I came to this country on my honeymoon and, later, gave birth to my son, who is now in a special school, where I, first, worked as a volunteer and, now, as a bus monitor. Recently the principal of the scool [sic] has offered me a full-time job as a teacher assistant, for which I need 30 college credits. that is why I registered at Truman College.

In his efforts at combining sentences, Sasha used far too many commas, a result of negative transfer from the Russian language. He also had several spelling errors, using sound-symbol associations rather than visual memory for words such as 'school.' This sentence-combining exercise appears to be of the type that would promote syntactic maturity suggested by O'Hare (1971) and may account in part for Sasha's writing development.

The topic of the "Final Exam I" of Level VI was about problems and possible solutions students had observed in the city. Although this exam was taken in class, Sasha had only 6 errors per 100 words. Before the exam, Sasha had expressed a fear that he was doing poorly, but two outside readers assessed his exam as having passed, a fact that elated Sasha.

"American Experience" was completed in his Level VII class and can thus be compared to "Why here?" in Level VI, also written in class. While the number of total words has almost doubled from 99 in "Why here?" to 174 in "Experience," the average errors per 100 words has dropped from 3 to 2. Surprisingly, the number of clauses per T-units had also dropped nearly in half to 1.77 in "American Experience," almost to the same levels found in Levels III and IV. In fact, the average clauses per T-units for Level VII was only 1.76.

During Level VII at Truman, Sasha was also asked to describe the steps to making something, a sandwich in Sasha's case. There were only 2.66 errors per 100 words, but 1.62 clauses per T-unit. Nevertheless, Sasha was very satisfied with this composition, as was his instructor who, based on his English writing proficiency, encouraged him to take the first regular English course.

The "Final Exam" for Level VII also bears close scrutiny because Sasha chose it as his very best writing effort (Chapter V). It was 870 words in length and had 2.37 errors per 100 words, despite the fact it was written in class. Clauses per T-unit at 1.90 was also longer than his other Level VII compositions. However, the average clause per T-units for Level VII was lower at 1.76 than for Level VI which averaged 2.29 clauses per T-unit. This could be an example of being able to say more with fewer words (Labov, 1963), a goal that Sasha was actively pursuing in learning to write in a Western rhetorical style (Appendix B).

He expressed great pleasure in his composing process during Final Exam II because it had flowed so effortlessly. However, the topic was similar to "Recommendation" written in the Summer of 1994 in that he was describing faculty members who had served him as mentors. Since he had worked through the vocabulary and sentence structure as he was editing and rewriting "Recommendation," he already had a model and organizational structure for Final Exam II. He did not have to think and labor over each word as he had done previously with "Recommendation" during his composing process (Chapter V).

Language Institute Oral Interviews

The most widely used technique for evaluating oral proficiency is the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Oral Interview which has been adapted by the Language Institute. The FSI interview has high reliability because it takes place in a more or less natural setting and is believed to be a good determinant of a person's true language comepetence. Its major drawback is that it is time-consuming and expensive to administer and score (Hendricks, D., G. Scholz, R. Spurling, M. Johnson, & L. Vandenburg, 1980).

Table 2

Language Institute Oral Interviews

	Total Words	Errors 100/words	Av.Words/ T-units	Av.Cl./ T-units
Interview #1 (Pre-Level I)	154	12	6.16	1.08
Interview #2 (Post-Level III)	225	2.5	7.50	1.03
Interview #3 (Post-Level V)	691	1.0	16.07	1.32

Analysis of Language Institute Oral Interviews

Watts (1944) and McNeill (1966) conducted research on aural/oral performance which indicated that children have acquired their full competence repertoires by the time they reach writing age at grade four. All kernel-type sentence types are used by fourth graders as well as twelfth graders.

Hunt (1964) also found that all transformations which operate on embedded sentences are acquired by the youngest writers. Adults, on the other hand, write two and one-third fewer T-units per given number of words than young children.

According to Harrell (1957), the average number of subordinate clauses in speaking and writing increases with age. Moreover, they are longer in written compositions than in oral expression after the eighth grade.

Labov (1963) found that those subjects most proficient with language are the ones who most frequently use language to express tentativeness. Supposition, hypothesis, and conditional statements occur much less frequently in the spoken language of those lacking skill in language (p. 85).

In his study, Labov found the high group handled oral signals more effectively than the low group. Their skill at using pitch, stress, and pause, combined with the relative freedom from using partial structural patterns was impressive. He predicted that those pupils who lack skill in using speech would have difficulty in mastering written tradition. According to Labov, competence in the spoken language appears to be a necessay base for competence in writing and reading (p. 88).

At this point in my analysis, it will be interesting to compare the syntactic maturity and number of errors Sasha made during his oral interviews for the Language Institute (before Level I after Level III and after Level V) with his written productions at the same levels in the Language Institute to determine if these same general trends or stages seem to exist for second language learners.

The average number of errors per 100 words during the first oral interview was 12 per 100 words. This can be compared to the average of 13 errors per 100 written words in Level I. However, the average spoken words per T-units (6.16) was closer to the average (6.34) in his very first written composition, "Classmate." Average spoken clauses in his first interview per T-unit (1.08) were lower in the oral interview than the average for written words in Level I (1.35), but close to the 1.06 he wrote in "My city."

This difference can be explained in part by the fact that Sasha was interviewed before his Level I classes began, while the written compositions were produced after he had been attending his Level I class.

After Level III, errors per 100 words during his oral interview had dropped dramatically from 12 to 2.5, around the level of the "Typical student" composition of Level III. Surprisingly, average words per T-unit at 7.5 was only slightly higher during oral speech in his second interview than they were before Level I (6.16) in his first interview. Average clauses per T-unit also remained about the same at 1.03 compared to 1.08 before Level I.

Sasha's post-Level V oral interview indicated that he had virtually eliminated all errors. It had now dropped to 1 error per 100 words. This can partly be explained by a strategy of consistent use of his language monitor (Krashen, 1983). Adult second language learners utilize the rules of grammar to a greater extent than do children.

This was a far better showing as far as errors go than in his written compositions at the same level of language development, except for "Recommendation." Since no compositions were written in Level V, we may use the 6.5 errors per 100 words for Level IV as a basis for comparison. However, the amount of self-correcting and monitoring Sasha does as he speaks, often caused him to lose his train of thought as he was constantly correcting his oral productions.

When the Level V oral interview words per T-unit at 16.07 is compared to his written compositions from all levels, Sasha was very close to all the written compositions he had produced in Level III and afterwards with the exception of "Decision" at 28.35 words per T-unit. From that point on, his written compositions all ranged around 20 words per T-unit.

Even more significant perhaps is the doubling of average words per T-unit in his oral interviews from 7.5 after Level III to 16.07 after Level V. This too is comparable to the average number of words per T-unit found in his Level III written compositions.

Average clauses per T-unit in the third oral interview after Level V also increased by one-third to 1.32 over the number of clauses per T-unit during his second oral interview after Level III. Despite this large increase in syntactic maturity in Sasha's oral expression between Levels III and V, his written syntactic maturity was consistently higher than his oral expression at the same level. In fact, his oral syntactic maturity was no higher than the average clauses per T-unit in his Level I compositions (1.35) over a year earlier.

These results appear to corroborate Harrell's (1957) observation that there is greater syntactic maturity in writing than there is in oral expression after the eighth grade in a first language, but also in a second language.

Sasha wrote more with each statement only after having left the Language Institute except for "Decision." In Level VI, he consistently wrote over two clauses per T-unit. This level of embedding dropped off in Level VII, perhaps as a result of now being able to say more with fewer words.

Sasha's attempts to embed as he edited the four endings to "Most important person" demonstrate that he understood one of the functions of editing. This will be described in Chapter V under Content Analysis. His retrospective interviews (Appendix B) also reveal his growing awareness of the differences in rhetoric styles between Russian and

English writers--to be more exact, simpler and shorter in number of total words when writing in English.

Outside Readers

As it turns out, this may be one of the more interesting aspects of my study on second language acquisition. Four members of the English faculty at National-Louis were asked to evaluate representative compositions that Sasha had written while in the Language Institute. Since he had not produced one for Level V, I sent them two compositions from Level IV, and one each from Levels I, II, and III without any identification as to the level when they were written.

Three instructors used the Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation which I had initially sent out with the samples to assess the compositions holistically (Table 3). I later asked three instructors to use the more specific ESL Composition Profile to analyze his work (Table 4). However, only two instructors used this instrument to assess Sasha's compositions, one of whom had also used the Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation to assess the same compositions (Table 5).

Additional comments were made by several of the faculty members after having completed one or both evaluations. These have been included in my analysis, since they may be examples of the types of reactions that English instructors have as they interact with second language writing. This might be useful in assessing the influence of the cultural background, gender, and even age of readers whose first language is English, as they assess compositions utilizing different rhetorical styles from other cultures.

I also asked all four faculty members to rank the five compositions based on their evaluations, 5 being the highest (Table 6). In addition, my case study subject was asked to rank all his compositions to provide a comparison with the faculty assessments (Table 6).

Finally, I tried to determine what correlation, if any, the number of errors and syntactic maturity had on the assessment process of English faculty as they assess second language writing (Table 7).

Table 3

Evaluation of Compositions by Outside Readers
Using 4 Pt. Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation

(1--lowest)
[See Appendix C]

Name of Comp. & Level	Rdr.#1	Rdr.#2	Rdr.#3
1. Helen(III)	4	4-	3+
2. Composition(IV)	4	4	4
3. My City(I)	3	3-	2
4. Jerusalem(II)	3	3-	3
5. Decision(IV)	2/3	4-	3-

Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation

Three English faculty members used the holistic 4-point Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation Scale to assess Sasha's writing. This instrument is used at the elementary level and at National to screen the writing samples of doctoral candidates (see Appendix C). Eight criteria are given equal weight from a low of 1 to a high of 4: (1) written expression, (2) ideas, (3) organization, (4) sentence structure, (5) vocabulary usage, (6) tone and feeling, (7) topic development, and (8) grammar and mechanics. These are benchmarks for assigning a holistic score ranging from 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest.

Sasha's five compositions from Levels I through IV were given six 4's, the highest value, three of them for "Composition," two for "Helen" and one for "Decision." According to the Highland Park Pupil Writing Assessment rubric, this means Sasha's compositions displayed richness through expression and description, his ideas were well-developed, and his organization was concise and flowing. Moreover, his vocabulary was precise, he displayed an emotional tone when appropriate, he reflected deep thought and had an excellent grasp of grammar and mechanics.

Seven 3's were also assigned, three for "Jerusalem," two for "City," one for "Helen" and one for "Decision." This meant that Sasha's writing displayed variety in expression, appropriate ideas, appropriate organization and complete, though repetitive sentences. His work reflected some use of emotional tone, communicated knowledge of the topic and met grade level expectations for grammar and mechanics.

Since "Decision" also received a 2/3 and "City" a 2, Sasha was evaluated as lacking some of the criteria for written expression, ideas, organization, sentence structure, vocabulary usage, tone and topic development. Most likely his grammar and mechanics were not a problem, since it appears to have been an area of particular interest and strength for Sasha (see Chapter 6 and Appendix B).

Additional Comments by Outside Readers:

Reader #1

> All the essays are good enough to place him in Fundamentals of Composition.

Reader #2

> Except for what I consider the weakest sample (Nekst Year [Jerusalem])--these samples improve mostly in gaining more flexibility in sentence and phrase structure, more 'comfort,' and an ability to be more colloquial and relaxed in style level....they range from a lower-end 3 to a low-to-middle 4. "Composition" and "Helen" are very close; one is formal, one is friendly."
>
> This student seemed unusually strong all the way through. Even the weakest essay would get at least a 3 on the [English] Competency Test; so fairly high levels.

Reader #3

> Obviously, "How to write a composition" is his "crowning jewel," but it rather bores me. Perhaps I

> feel that way because he does not "tell his story," an activity at which he excels. He tends to use unnecessarily 'learned' words like 'contiguous' and 'poignant' rather inappropriately.
>
> But he has advanced--oh, yes! Here he who once described his city in short sentences has been able to advance to this complex dissection of how to write an English essay. I just hope that he doesn't lose his common touch. Also I hope he opts in favor of composing in English rather than translating from another language after composing: He conducted a discussion with himself on that matter.

At the time Sasha wrote this composition, he was still translating from his native language, a developmental stage and learning strategy employed during second language acquisition that faculty from a regular English Department may not be as sensitive to.

ESL Composition Profile

I next asked all four members of the English Department to use the more discrete-point assessment device designed specifically for ESL student compositions, the ESL Composition Profile. However, only two of them chose to use this instrument to assess Sasha's compositions. Reader #2 had already used the Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation and was, perhaps, more comfortable with the holistic method of assessment. However, Reader #3 did use both scales to evaluate Sasha's compositions (Table 5). Since both Readers #3 and #4 are located on the urban campus of NLU, they may have been more comfortable in assessing ESL compositions with the ESL Composition Profile.

Table 4

ESL Composition Profile (See Appendix C)

Name of Composition & Level	Grade from Rdr. #3	Grade from Rdr. #4
1. Helen (III)	98	86
2. Composition (IV)	100	90
3. My city (I)	87	81
4. Jerusalem (II)	95	80
5. Decision (IV)	94	85

Reader #3 described "City" as the work of a new speaker with short non-complex sentences, but "O.K." It was also suggested that "Jerusalem" needed a final proof-reading.

An additional comment by Reader #3 was that she felt Sasha "was going down a slippery slope when he [Sasha] considered doing the planning or pre-writing in Russian [in "Composition."] He needs to make the break and is ready to do so. The student needs to be reminded that in brevity rather than verbosity lies force. But he is obviously a fine thinker and now a good writer. We should keep track of him."

Actually, many second language writers prefer to use their native languages for different genres or topics, as well as for pre-writing (Brown, 1987). Reader #3 also stated that she found assessing different kinds of subjects by the same writer difficult.

Previously, Reader #3 had evaluated Sasha's compositions using the Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation. The results showed a close correspondence with the grades given on the ESL Composition Profile and her overall rankings for the compositions (Table 5). That is, based on reader #3's evaluations, holistic evaluation and discrete-point evaluation of ESL compositions appear to be closely related. This is not surprising in view of the fact that Kameen (1983) had found close correlation between holistic and discrete-point evaluations of ESL Compositions.

Table 5

Comparing Assessments and Rankings Made by Reader #3

Composition & Level	Highland Park	ESL Composition Profile	Ranking
1. Helen (III)	3+	98	2
2. Composition (IV)	4	100	1
3. My City (I)	2	87	5
4. Jerusalem (II)	3	95	3
5. Decision (IV)	3-	94	4

Although Reader #2 had already used the Highland Park Scale to evaluate Sasha's compositions, she indicated that Sasha's writing would have placed him into the upper two levels of the ESL Composition Profile. This meant that she evaluated the compositions as "Excellent to very good" and "Good" throughout for content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics.

Her written statement indicated that she found that "his compositions never showed poor reasoning, lack of a topic sentence, little or no sequencing or organization, frequent errors in idioms, frequent errors in verb tense or frequent errors in spelling or punctuation." Reader #2 also added the interesting comment that this rubric [ESL Composition Profile] lacked a way to reward the ability to be flexible, colloquial and relaxed--to sound "American." Perhaps this reflects an attitude on her part that Standard English Writing irrespective of the writer's cultural background is the goal of English instructors.

It is unfortunate that I did not yet have samples of his later writings from Levels VI and VII (see Table 6) when I sent out Sasha's writing samples, so that Reader #2 might have noted a trend toward more flexibility, colloquialisms and the relaxed sounds of "Americans" in Sasha's later compositions.

Table 6

Retrospective Evaluation of Compositions by Subject and Outside Readers
(1 = highest)

Name of Comp.	Rank by Subj.	Rank by Rdr.#1	Rank by Rdr.#2	Rank by Rdr.#3	Rank Rdr.#4
Level I					
My City	---	4	4	5	4
Zhanna	13				
Level II					
Hometown*	10				
Jerusalem	14 (4)**	3	5	3	5
Level III					
Helen	11 (2)	2	2	2	2
Typical	8				
Level IV					
Person*	4				
Composition	7 (1)	1	1	1	1
Decision	12 (3)	5	3	4	3
Post Level V					
Recommend.*	2				
Level VI					
Brownsville*	3				
Vietnam	6				
Final I	9				
Level VII					
Make something*	5				
Final II*	1				

* Favorite topics of subject

** Case Study Subject's ranking for samples sent to English faculty in parentheses

Faculty Ranking of Compositions

There is consistency among my outside readers from the English Department for most of Sasha's compositions. All four faculty members gave "Composition" identical rankings of 1, as well as 2 for "Helen." "Decision" ranked below "Helen" for all four English instructors, even though it had half the number of errors (6) per 100 words as did "Helen" from Level III at 12 errors per 100 words. On the other hand, "Jerusalem," with the same number of errors per 100 words as "Helen" only received a ranking of 3 from two members and a 5 from two others. It would appear that errors alone are not as crucial as other aspects of writing.

Not surprisingly, "City" from Level I with 16 errors per 100 words received a rank of 4 from two members, while a third gave it a 3 and a fourth gave it a 5. It was surprising, however, that "Decision" was given two 3's, one 4, and one 5 given the fact that the number of errors was only slightly above that of "Composition" at 6 per 100 words. Conversely, "Jerusalem" from Level II received two 5's and two 3's.

When comparing all the results from the Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation and the ESL Composition Profile, "Composition" again ranks as #1 and "Helen" is #2. The other three compositions were split in both instruments. I wanted to know the possible influence of errors and syntactic maturity on the outside readers' assessments and rankings (Table 7).

Table 7

Comparing Faculty Rankings with Errors & Syntactic Maturity

Composition & Level	Av.Errors/ 100 words	Total Av.Cl/ T-units	Av. Fac. Ranking
1. Helen (III)	12.0	1.75	2
2. Composition(IV)	4.0	1.68	1
3. My City (I)	15.0	1.06	4
4. Jerusalem (II)	12.0	1.66	5
5. Decision (IV)	6.0	3.25	3

Based on the average faculty rankings of Sasha's compositions, the number of errors does play a little part, but the syntactic maturity (Total Cl./T-units) does not appear to play a crucial part in assessing the overall quality of compositions by teachers of English composition. If number of errors is the criteria, then "Composition" should indeed have been ranked first, as it is, and "Jerusalem" should have been fourth rather than fifth. Moreover, based on syntactic maturity, "Decision" should have been first, not third, and "Helen" should have been second.

While "Composition" indeed had the lowest number of errors, 4 per 100 words, it lacked the syntactic maturity of "Decision" with 3.25 clauses per T-unit, but 6 errors per 100 words. It may be inferred that syntactic maturity is less important to an English writing evaluator than some other factors that I will attempt to explain.

Subject's Ranking of Compositions

When I asked Sasha himself to rank his own compositions, he did so for all the compositions he had given me over the two years. He did not rank "City" as the English instructors had done because he felt it had only been an exercise. However, I did rank the other four compositions which I had given to the outside readers so as to compare them with Sasha's.

Sasha's estimation of all his compositions was entirely consistent with the evaluations of the English Department faculty in that he ranked "Composition" first and "Helen" above "Decision." Like the English faculty, "Jerusalem" was ranked last by Sasha.

The role of topic in assessment

Although the fact that rankings of "5" and "4" would be given for "Decision" was surprising, a familiarity with the topic of composing in English (in "Composition") and an unfamiliarity with the rhetorical conventions of a writer from a different culture (in "Decision") may have influenced the faculty members' choices for ranking. Indeed, Reader #2 had expressed difficulty when assessing ESL compositions. However, "Decision" was important in this study for its ability to reveal some of the agonies that Sasha was undergoing in the process of acculturation (Schumann, 1978).

Perhaps Sasha's unhappiness with the topic itself and the negative feelings he had had to relive as he wrote "Decision" may have come through in his writing. He had also expressed to his Level IV instructor his dissatisfaction with this composition, since he had not had sufficient time to edit it. In his interviews (Appendix B), Sasha expressed his inability and unwillingness to address this topic properly at this early stage of his life.

Sasha gave "Composition" a 7, "Helen" an 11, "Decision" a 12, and "Jerusalem" a 14, his lowest. His ranking corresponds to the rankings given by my outside readers. Thus, Sasha ranked his own compositions in the same order as did members of the English Department.

Favorite topics of the subject

The importance of topics for the writer can be seen in Table 6. Not one of the compositions given to the English Department faculty had been considered a favorite of the writer himself. Of course, these were examples of his earliest writings, so he may have considered them unlikely candidates for writing quality.

Surprisingly, Sasha did choose "Hometown" from Level II as one of his favorite compositions. Most of his favorites were either creative productions, such as "Person Whom I Remember" [about his grandfather and which he admits he wrote for himself], "Brownsville," a narrative, and "How to Make Something" which he had fun with. The last two were written for Truman College.

Having spoken to the subject at great length, the fact that he saw "Jerusalem" and "Decision" simply as assigned topics probably caused Sasha to produce compositions that evoked little emotion and interaction from his readers. "Helen" was a description of a beloved friend, so Sasha attempted to forget the rules of grammar and rise to the level of the subject herself (see Appendix B). That may explain why the outside readers consistently evaluated "Helen" higher in quality than "Decision" and "Jerusalem."

"Composition" was written for my benefit, since Sasha knew that the subject of my dissertation was going to be about the writing process of a second language learner. Thus, he was motivated and had a reason for writing on a topic of his own choosing (the steps to doing something).

Two of his favorite compositions were not seen by the outside readers, since the first, "Recommendation," was written while I was observing him and the second was written at the end of Level VII at Truman College during the Spring of 1995. Like "Composition," "Recommendation" was also written in my behalf of my tenure, while "Final II" was written to express his gratitude to his American mentors and was similar in tone to "Recommendation." He had a purpose for writing and was personally involved in these two compositions. This may be the ultimate reason why some compositions are evaluated as higher in quality than others by outside readers.

Also interesting was the fact that Sasha's compositions indicated to members of the English Department who administer the English Competency Exam and also evaluate writing samples at the end of Communication Development II that he was ready to take regular English Composition courses, this after having only completed Level IV of the Language Institute.

Having been an instructor for the two Communication Development courses offered to students after completing Level V of the Language Institute, I know that relatively few students go directly into the regular English courses, many having first to take Strategies of Writing, a developmental course, or to take it at the same time they are enrolled in Fundamentals of Composition because they have not yet mastered the rhetorical style of writers of English. We can infer then that Sasha's compositions indicate he had reached a level where his second language writing development reflected the Standard English Writing (SEW) the English faculty believe is necessary for success within an academic setting.

From these results, it may be also be inferred that assessing second language written compositions either holistically or by specific weighted criteria is difficult even for faculty who may perform such tasks routinely for first language students. While there is general agreement when second language compositions have topics that are familiar or evoke warm emotions, those exhibiting the rhetorical differences from earlier stages of second language acquisition may be more troublesome for many outside readers.

At the time I chose the five compositions, I had not known which topics Sasha liked best. Had I to do it over again, I would have given my outside readers "Zhanna" from Level I, "Hometown" from Level II, "Typical" and "Helen" from Level III, and "Composition" from Level IV. I would have also included "Brownsville" from Level VI and "Final II" from Level VII, two more of his favorite topics. Finally, I would have included a composition that demonstrated relaxed, colloquial and an American style of writing for Reader #2.

According to Kameen (1983), good college-level ESL writers wrote an average of 18.40 words/T-unit. Since Sasha's average for Level IV had reached 20 words/T-unit, we can assume then that Sasha can be ranked with other good ESL writers. All these measures of writing development are useful in providing some guidelines for those of us who must make judgments as to the quality of second language writing.

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT/PROCESS

Writing Content Analysis

I hoped that the content of Sasha's compositions would reveal the attitudes and perceptions of a second-language college student who had immigrated to the United States for either instrumental or integrative purposes and to study the route of his assimilation into a new culture. As Vygotsky (1962) pointed out, language comes from a culture and from its history. It cannot be considered as a separate entity. Therefore, this is Sasha's story in his own words.

Level I

Three of the eight compositions in Level I describe places in Ukraine. "My Friend's Name is Zhanna" appeared to have been organized as a comparison/contrast composition, describing similar and different physical features between the writer and his friend, Zhanna. Indeed, that is the format that had been proposed by the instructor.

> She's short and she has long hair, but I'm not short and I have short hair. The colors of our eyes and hair is the same.

After a rather choppy beginning based on this organizational structure, a new fluidity was noted, probably as memory and emotion overcame concern over form. That is, when the writer became more interested in communicating his innermost feelings, he became less rigid in his sentence formation. This is the only composition from Level I that Sasha believed was a "legitimate" composition rather than a practice exercise.

Of all the Level I compositions, "Zhanna" is also the most interesting because Sasha's own voice was finally heard as he produced a warm, personal narrative. A predominant theme in this composition is one of nostalgia and longing for the old days, a theme that recurred in subsequent compositions and which is probably characteristic of most immigrants, according to Schumann's model of acculturation (1978).

> She (Zhanna) always understand me, and I always understand her too. We sometimes understand each other without any words....she goes (like I did) to my favorite theatre in my city now. She can see and listen to a lot of different operas there, so she's very happy. She sits in the second row, on one of our old seats (near the conductor) and she listens to music and enjoys herself with our friends. They always remember me, and I remember them too.
>
> She with my friend Lena sent me a letter for my birthday with the words: 'You are always with us!' I often read these words and sometimes cry.

Level II

During the Summer of 1993, Sasha wrote two more descriptive compositions which carried on the same theme of nostalgia. The two compositions in Level II were similar in number of errors per 100 words and in number of dependent clauses per T-unit. In "My Home Town" Sasha not only described its history, but identified several buildings and streets. Surprisingly, Sasha chose this as one of only six writing topics he found to be interesting over the course of two years of second language instruction.

> The city is also a big cultural centre of (the) country, so there are musicul instituts and Orkestra Hall, some art schools and museums, and historical museums; many different churches, theatres and libraries, monuments and other sights. Most of those public places are in my home town neighborhood, and it was very convenient to attend them. They're in different kinds of buildings. Some of them are in buildings with old style architecture, others are modern.
>
> I miss my city, my lovely friends, my wonderful teachers; streets of my city - places, where I like to spend my time, and my home town neighborhood, where I grew up and spent my youth.

On the other hand, "Next Year, Jerusalem" was a description of a future trip that Sasha did not seem overly anxious to take. This can be seen in the tone that he adopts; a chronological timetable with little affect and anticipation. He later characterized the ending as something he used simply to end the composition.

> I am Jewish so my old dream is a trip to Israel - the holy country of my ancestors. When I lived in the USSR, it was impossible to travel there. Many things changed in the world of late years. I plan to spend my first vacation there with my grandmother. First, we need to visit my grandmother's sisters, and then I have to visit my lovely friend...I dream of seeing her

> as soon as it will be possible. I can image [sic] how much we will talk.

It would appear that Sasha enjoyed writing about his home town in "Hometown" and had a sense of audience as he described his old neighborhood with which he was so familiar. In fact, he later chose "Hometown" as one of his favorite topics. He also ranked "Hometown" as 10, but "Jerusalem" as 14.

Since the two compositions were supposed to have been written in simple past and past continuous tenses, this may have explained part of the problem. Sasha acknowledged that conforming to these requirements was extremely difficult.

Level III

In Level III we again have a chance to analyze two compositions. The primary tone that is felt in "Hello, my dear Helen" is again of regret and longing. While it is the voice of a typical immigrant, in this case it is that of a young Russian-Jew reflecting upon some of the tremendous social and political changes that have wracked the ex-Soviet Union, since I first visited it in 1990.

In the Fall of 1993 Sasha writes in "Dear Helen" as follows: "Who could imagine one year ago the situation like this was possible?" This was a common cry heard around the world with the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe.

That Sasha was from Ukraine is also significant, since many pogroms occurred there throughout its history.

"Helen" was one of five compositions given to outside readers. Without exception, "Helen" always ranked second after "Composition" with English faculty members as well as Sasha. In fact, the two compositions were described by one reader as being "very close;" "Helen" being friendly and "Composition" being formal.

From the interviews I held with Sasha, it was apparent that he had suffered such discrimination in a most painful way. He was unable to enter Moscow Conservatory when its officials learned of his ethnic background. Since he was unable to pay the tuition that only he, as a Jew, would have to pay, this amounted to a denial of admission. It was the reason he and his family emigrated to the U.S. He continues in "Dear Helen" with the following words:

> My G-d! Why didn't we appreciate the time when we could get together and discuss arts or study, listen to music or see movies, go to the theater or play the piano, work with our own quire (choir) or travel around the country and at the same time argue and argue without stopping. It's almost eight months since I saw you last time, and just now I am beginning to understand what you are for me...

The preceding list of activities that Sasha had participated in gives the reader some idea of his previous culture and background. He then goes on to describe a dream about his past life...

> Just yesterday I had a dream. I saw all our company. I also dreamed about our trips to Moscow and

> Odessa. There were lots of pictures from the past in front of my eyes and I was crying about my native land, my friends who are so far from me, my home town, and streets which are so native. Just only here I'm beginning to feel and understand what I lost, and my wish to return for studying gets stronger every day.

His instructor gave him an "A" for this composition based on his "excellent" content, vocabulary, and mechanics. However, Sasha was only given a "good" for his organization.

In the second Level III composition, "I am not a typical American student," Sasha explains why taking an ESL course does not make him a "bona fide" student. "Mostly young immigrants, we are just taking our first steps towards knowledge of the language and trying to prepare ourselves to become students."

Sasha then compares and contrasts his present situation in the U.S. with foreign students he has seen in Russia at the Glinka Music School.

> A lot of young people from all over the world have studied there since Perestroyka began. The truth is also that none of them know how to speak Russian. They still cannot attend regular sessions with regular Russian students because it doesn't simply make sense...It seems to me that my situation here in America is quite the same as theirs in Russia...
>
> American people often use the phrase "It takes time."...It especially takes a long time when it has to do with the immigration process and the process of learning a language.
>
> The problem is that even if you are formally a student, you continue not to be a typical one in a new country....It was my decision to come here and temporarily not be a typical person. I'm really

> enjoying the way to becoming an American student and the only thing I can wish is to have this way be as short as possible.

Here again in "I am not a typical American student" the writer is becoming more introspective, as he discusses the problems of an immigrant student. As was done in "Zhanna," he is using the organizational pattern of comparison/contrast in describing what foreign students in Russia go through and comparing it to his own situation here. He has learned to use his prior knowledge and apply it to a new situation or question.

However, it was not till later that I found out that Sasha was unaware that he was even employing this organizational strategy in one of his most error-free and insightful essays at the Language Institute. I am sorry that I did not use "Student" as one of the five compositions given to outside evaluators for their evaluations and comments.

> It has been almost nine months since I came to the United States and around seven months since I entered the door of the university for the first time. I am looking up the definition for the word"student"inmy Oxford American Dictionary--the most American English dictionary I have. According to the mentioned dictionary a typical student in America is a person who goes to a certain place, gets his or her education, and, of course, doesn't need to begin learning English. I'm not a typical American student because I am studying English.
>
> It's pretty obvious that I don't even know what it is like. This is why I had better return with my thoughts to my native country and remember the situation of foreign students in Glinka Music School.

The fact that he was able to produce this composition without a model or story of a typical American student, but simply used a dictionary definition to decide if he was typical or not is a testament to Sasha's innate writing abilities probably deriving from his first language experiences with reading and writing.

Level IV

As noted earlier, three compositions were completed during the Interim after Level IV had officially ended. Only one, "The New Year's Eve" was written in class during Level IV.

Using the "passive voice" as instructed, Sasha sets the scene for the New Year's Eve celebration as follows:

> The New Year's pine tree is already decorated. It's usually done the day before the new Year's Eve....Everybody is waiting for 12 o'clock....Nobody decides to look under the tree, but everybody feels that there is something there. How was it put there? New Year's presents are usually put by every member of our family at around nine o'clock so "the smell" of gifts is being felt for so long time that everybody is thinking about the only them. The New Year's tree is going to be lighted at around 11:45. The candles are blown out.

Knowing that I was studying his writing development, Sasha chose "How to write a composition" as his next project. At 1082 words, it is the longest except for Part II of "Person." It is also a combination of humor, insight and amazing elucidation of psychological processes involved in reading that one could expect from a person who undoubtedly has never had a course in the psychology and strategies of reading and writing.

This is one of five compositions which I gave to my outside readers to evaluate. Whether assessed holistically, by a 4-pt. scale, or a weighted ESL Composition Profile, this composition was ranked as first. Sasha also ranked it first among the five compositions evaluated by the English Department faculty.

> It has been almost a year since I began studying English at NLU and had to write compositions....I had never written compositions in English (by that time.) Therefore, I, being absolutely unprepeared [sic] for such opportunities to use the language, always remained in the role of a dog which has something to say, but isn't able. That was the reason why I always felt the lack of any enthusiasm whenever it was time to write a new composition.
>
> One of the most popular Russian proverbs says, "The further you go into a forest, the more firewood you can find. One day, I "went" so far to the forest of grammar formulas that I unexpectedly "found" myself in a new level of knoledge [sic] of the language. That was time when writing compositions ceased being a burden, but, on the contrary, became a source of great satisfaction even in spite of still-remaining "dog's complex."

The humor of his dog analogy is then replaced by an astounding description reminiscent of some recent psychological theories about the reading process:

> Reading the topic of a composition is always not only the starting point for answering this question, but also the stimulus for the whole process of writing. It is always better to consider the meaning of each word taken separately, temporarily forgetting about the general idea. In that case, we are not so

limited in understanding the meaning of each word, which is usually inevitable in the conditions of their interdependency in the context of the topic. As a result, we, disposing of more extensive information about each component, might have more contiguous points between the words when we project them each onto other again and on a new level.

...Then, we begin to connect everything with our personal experience and receive plenty of thoughts, ideas, and opinions, the list of which is always better to write down.

Meanwhile, the computer of our memory continues to give us plenty of associations from personal experience.

...The technical possession of the language is the most important, and everything consists not only and rather not in the knowledge of "where to put comas [sic].

Another technical problem I'd like to talk about is the problem of translation. For those whose native language isn't English and who try to write in it, there are at least two ways of doing that. The first is to write a composition in the native language first, and only then, translate it to English. The second one is to try to state your thoughts in English right away.

In any case, we have to work with a dictionary because our vocabulary isn't perfect. Since all Russian-English dictionaries have the same shortcoming as English-Russian dictionaries, and to understand English-English ones well for us is still impossible, I prefer to use at least one representative of each group. That means that each unfamiliar word is checked at least three times, which quite often is not enough. However, looking at this situation from the point of view of a person who wants to learn more, I always find this work doubly useful.

...As a matter of fact, I haven't yet made up my mind about which language to use first in my pre-writing activities. The only thing I can say is that I'm used to deriving maximum benefits for myself in any case. Finally, concluding my narration, I'd like to remind the reader that writing compositions always indicates the ability to think. The ability to think in English, in turn, indicates the level of knowledge of the language.

Not only has Sasha written an excellent composition in English, his second language, but he has analyzed the steps and metacognitive processes he and other writers take in order to do so. To be able to analyze and write this while learning a second language is a testament to the hard work he has put into this labor of love and art--a truly remarkable feat.

All four of my outside readers gave "Composition" their highest ranking of 1 (Table 6). It is no wonder his Level IV instructor made copies of this composition for her own students!

It is perhaps unfortunate that Sasha found the last topic, "Decision," to be in his own words, "stupid." How was one to decide on his 'most important decision' until he had reached the end of his life and could truly assess what the most important decision in his life had been? Nonetheless, Sasha tried to answer this question to the best of his ability.

Actually this composition will also be remembered for its syntactic maturity (3.25 clauses per T-unit), the highest of any of his compositions over two years. Nevertheless, "Decision" was ranked by one outside reader as last out of five writing samples, one gave it a ranking of 4 and two gave it a 3. When the ESL Composition Profile was used, Content, Vocabulary, and Mechanics were in the "Good" range, while Organization and Language Use were "Excellent to Very Good." This is described in greater detail at the end of this section.

> While I was leaving my country in February of 1993, I was quite sure that my decision to immigrate to the United States had been of the most importance in my life...that conclusion was really true, but only for the time it was drawn. As it turned out later, my destiny had prepared lots of trials to put on me...
>
> I am a musician; as a result, the first thing I did right after coming here was asking my relatives about musical life in this country...They advised me to "relax" with my music, which simply meant to forget about it...my relatives explained that the best musicians from all over the world were here, and to think of beginning a career in such a situation was very irresponsible on my part.
>
> There is an opinion among immigrants that the most valuable thing for us is moral support, not even financial support,but simply encouragment [sic]....I simply needed someone to believe in me, but I was alone. At first, I felt lonely, which, by the way, was the cause of depression.

Although Sasha had been reluctant to write about this topic, it did reveal one of the acculturation steps he had to encounter and pass through in order to reach his goal, the successful learning of a second language (Schumann, 1978). That this period of culture shock, anomie, loneliness and longing for his old life is the most crucial stage for mastering a second language was hardly known or a consolation for Sasha at that time of his life.

Sasha also refers in this composition to his plan to read music books such as the one about Shostokovich translated into English, so as to improve his writing (See

Appendix A). In discussing "The most important decision in my life," Sasha was reported by his Level IV teacher to have been unhappy with it, since there had not been enough time during the Interim for him to do an adequate job of revising it.

Sasha began the composition by writing that the question of immigration had seemed to have been the most crucial decision he had ever faced. However, a more important one faced him after his arrival to the U.S. We see that the choice of a practical as opposed to an artistic career that one loves is a dilemma faced by many children of immigrants. In this case, it has led to a schism between Sasha and his relatives who live nearby in Skokie.

> That was the last time I talked to my relatives and the first time when I questioned myself seriously if I should or should not continue my music career. The next couple months were the most poignant in my entire life...I needed someone to believe in me, but I was alone...
>
> One day I understood that the only irresponsible on my part was my counting on someone else's encouragement. At once I believed in myself, my talent, my ability...That was the way I got to know and found myself.
>
> America has always been considered the country of freedom and chance. I became a free person when I made my decision. Now I have to use that freedom to prepare myself for a chance.

Sasha had come to the U.S. to pursue his musical career which had come to a halt in Moscow due to discrimination against Jews. His decision to stick to his original goal has been a lonely, but a strengthening one.

"The Person Whom I Remember" was a monumental 2000 word project for someone like Sasha who had so recently begun to learn English as a second language. Because the topic had so much meaning for Sasha and he had made the purpose for writing it his own, he undertook this composition as a testimonial to a beloved relative.

At 244 words, Part I is the shortest. In it, Sasha experimented with a philosophical tone as he wrote, "We knock on the door of future persistently with the staff of the civilization. Then, after noticing that it has always been open, we become paralyzed before the abyss of uncertainty, forgetting about the eternity of our memory. The whirlpool of aims, plans, dreams, and hopes carries us away into nowhere, into the pitch darkness of mistakes which we are born to repeat."

Part II, the longest at 1080 words, begins with the setting that brought up memories of his grandfather's death.

> I was sitting at the kitchen table, eating, and being absorbed in my thoughts...the first bite from the roll called up the chain of sad recollections and opened old wounds...
>
> I remembered my street, the baker's shop...and one person whose existence had been of the most importance to me up to the moment of his death...A lot of time has passed since my grandfather died in 1991. Many changes have happened in my life, among which coming to the U.S. was the most cardinal.
>
> However, here, in immigration, through the nightmare of the past, and through the anticipation of what is meant to be, memories of him remain the light islets of happiness which I was surrounded with in the

good old days.

Sasha then describes his grandfather's death and the vivid dream he has about him on the fortieth day anniversary of his death.

> I remembered how I loved to sit with him at the kitchen table for hours or helped at the stove, listening to his wisdom. Once again I felt his generous love, kindness, and endless devotion, with which he had been surrounding me since the moment of my birth, and I shouted, conversing with him for the last time, "Fly, fly, my darling! Fly away and never be afraid of my obliivion! Let someone be lucky finding your holy soul!"

Part III is an alternative ending to this narrative and deals more explicitly with the concept of time that Sasha had introduced in Part I. According to Sasha, he preferred this ending, but he had again run out of time during the Interim to edit it. Therefore, it is strictly a first draft. It evokes a darker mood and reflects how Sasha was feeling when he wrote it.

> It was a gloomy autumnal morning...I wasn't a stranger in front of the grave of my memory, carelessly leaning against the tree of my memory. I saw an enormous woman's figure, covered with a crude dark cloak...her face seemed so familiar to me that I...suddenly greeted her...Two...severe streams of tears flowed down her cheeks...the gaining winds whispered her name, "Madam Time!"...I turned around...The cemetery path was empty all the way down...There, in the distance, where the clouds were becoming thin, and the gray haze was dissipating, a new hope was given to me by the brightening horizon. I was awakening...

Upon interviewing Sasha later about this composition (see Appendix B), he indicated that the theme for both Parts II and III was the realigning and adjustment required in "letting go" of his precious grandfather. "Awakening" means awakening not from a dream so much as it is a renewal or affirmation of life without his grandfather. The dream sequence then was a metaphor for his own life.

Level VI (Truman College)

Essentially, "Rosemary" was an exercise in listening comprehension for Sasha, since he did not know what a summary was or how to write one as requested by the instructor. The instructor read a short story aloud to the class, after which the students were to write a summary and choose the worst character in the story, giving reasons for his/her choice.

Not knowing what a summary was and not having had it explained to the class, Sasha simply wrote everything that he could remember. Therefore, her response to his composition stating that Sasha had spent too much time on writing a summary, but not enough for details was understandably puzzling to Sasha.

> Once, a twenty-one-year-old girl named Rosemary faced a problem. She couldn't cross the river on the other bank of which lived Jeffry [sic], a young man whom she was engaged with for several months. The river with numerous hungry crocodiles was very deep and wide, so the girl decided to go to one of her friends Cidney [sic] and ask him to help her, knowing that he had a boat. However, when she found out what was Cidney's condition, which was to spend one night with

> him before he would give her a ride, she was distressed and insolted [sic] and went to another friend of hers named Frad [sic]. He attentively listened to her story, yet refused to help, saying the problem wasn't his but hers and that he was too busy. She decided to go back to Cidney and spent the night with him.
>
> The next morning she was delivered to the other coast, and, soon, saw her fiance....
>
> There are five characters in this story and the behavior of four of them I would consider to be imprapor [sic] and worthless. Yet, the worst personage in my opinion was the fiance', and I have several reasons to think so.
>
> The first reason why Jeff is worse is the fact that he most likely didn't even think hard enough before judging the poor girl. He didn't consider the fact that the reason Rosemarry [sic] did what she did was love for him and desire to be near him. He also didn't value the, indeed, heroic deed which she accomplished, and this is the second reason why he isn't a worthy man. In fact, she could have not told him anything at all and be better off. And there, he also missed the main point which was her love for him and her decency. Anything else shouldn't have mattered.

On a scale between 1 (deficient) and 5 (excellent), Sasha received six 4's and four 3's from this instructor for spending too much time summarizing and not enough on details.

Sasha's instructor also questioned the use of the word, "decency." It was apparent to me that revealing the night with Sidney was what Sasha was alluding to. Understanding Sasha as I do, such a remark was not unexpected. However, the instructor probably inferred that "decency" had something to do with indiscretion rather than character. It is also apparent that Sasha's voice and his generosity of spirit rings very clear in his analysis of the characters.

Level VII (Truman College)

Sasha was asked to describe the "steps to making something"; he decided upon the procedure for making a sandwich. He began the composition by describing a new grocery store in his neighborhood and his purchase of some ingredients to make this gourmet offering. To my surprise, Sasha found this topic to be interesting; he "had fun writing it."

> The first step was to prepare the mushrooms. They were of that very kind which you can eat without the preliminary frying or boiling. I washed one very thoroughly and got rid of the thin skin on the cap and stem.

Later he describes how he had to arrange the ingredients in the actual sandwich:

> This very difficult operation was done by putting the mushroom slices on the top of one piece of bread with cheese and covering that combination with the other piece of bread in a "mirrorly" way (with the cheese inside).

The teacher's response was to note, "A very clever paper---and well-written." Most remarkable is the fact that Sasha was able to produce this amusing composition in class in forty minutes. Upon interviewing him later, Sasha described this topic as one he had fun with, so it was one of his few favorite topics.

Something of Sasha's voice and personality, as well as his former culture, can be gleaned from the content of his early compositions in English. As one of the outside English professors commented, "He is very good at telling his story."

Writing Process Analysis

Observing Sasha's writing process was a highlight of this study, as it revealed a great deal about his character and personality in addition to his second language acquisition.

It may bear repeating at this point that Sasha had been unwilling or unable to produce his three Level IV compositions during the regular Winter 1994 quarter, and had had to wring it out of himself during the following Interim period in order to register for Level V. I was naturally concerned that Sasha might be having a writer's block.

When I questioned him, Sasha admitted that he liked to read books and then think about them, but not necessarily to write about what he had read. When I then asked if he had enjoyed writing in Russia, he said he had not.

I interviewed both his Level IV and V instructors about what they had observed about Sasha's second language acquisition. Acknowledging the fact that Sasha had had a difficult time completing his written assignments, his Level IV instructor suggested that giving Sasha a topic of his own choosing, such as in music, might have made writing more interesting for him. Perhaps writing while listening to music would also have helped.

Upon checking later with Sasha, he replied in the negative, since listening to music as he was writing would have been too distracting; he would have been listening to the music rather than tending to his writing.

We know that Sasha was eventually able to write "A person whom I remember" in Level IV. How had this eventually come about? Why Sasha had written it for himself, not the teacher. The fact that he was personally involved in creating this "work of art" affirms what the communicative function of language is all about; it must have meaning and purpose for the writer. In fact, his Level V teacher used this very phrase in describing Sasha--that he used English as a communicative tool, despite the fact that he was unable to produce a single composition for him.

The first draft of "Person", according to his Level IV instructor, had been twenty-four pages in length and was rather 'free-form' in style. She preferred that he develop one theme instead, so he was able to pare it down substantially.

Of great interest are four versions of a conclusion for Part III of "The Person" which I discovered among Sasha's papers. These are reproduced here as a sample of Sasha's editing process. His growing maturity in writing is evidenced by the shorter total length of each paragraph as Sasha increased the degree of embedding.

Sasha was able to reduce the total words in the final paragraph from 65 in paragraph one to 43 in the fourth version, the shortest being 37 words in his third attempt. Moreover, the number of connectors made the final paragraph smoother and more coherent. The repetition of two sentences beginning with "that" in the final version may have been important to Sasha for the rhythm and pace he felt was needed at the conclusion of this poetic narrative.

> I. When I was a child, I was always very afraid of a death since that was the only eternal thing in my life. However, in that morning, I stopped and wasn't anymore. I also wasn't afraid of being impertinent towards Time anymore since I had received one important hope from the sky. That thing was also meant to be eternal in my life. That was memory. (65 words, 5 errors)
>
> II. When I was a child, I was always very afraid of a death. In that morning, I stopped and wasn't anymore. A ... hope was given to me from the sky. At the same time I became very sure in the eternity of my memory, by which I wasn't afraid of being impertinent towards Time anymore. I received one more thing which was meant to be eternal in my life. That was memory. (72 words, 5 errors)
>
> III. In that morning, I stopped and wasn't [afraid] anymore. I received one more thing, which was meant to be eternal in my life, and that was memory. (37 words, 2 errors)
>
> IV. From that morning (when a new hope was given to me from the sky I wasn't afraid of being impertinent towards Time anymore since I received one important hope. That thing was also meant to be eternal in my life. That was memory. (43 words, 1 error)

Because he had written this poetic composition for himself, it would probably be classified by Britton et al.,(1975) as an expressive endeavor. It is writing that is "close to the self," its verbal construct being to satisfy oneself.

Furthermore, this topic is one through which Sasha was able to make discoveries for himself. By exploring his topic, he gained new insight into his relationship with his grandfather and was able to find resolution to his grandfather's departure.

Knowing that I had planned to study his writing development, Sasha chose for his second topic on the steps to doing something, the writing process itself. "How to write a composition" had a transactional function, to be informative for the reader.

The third essay, "Most important decision in my life" was difficult for Sasha to write, since he felt he was not old enough to judge what had been the most important decision in his short existence. Because time during the Interim was growing short, he submitted his uncorrected draft, still extremely dissatisfied with his efforts, according to his Level IV instructor. Nevertheless, this composition had the lowest number of errors and greatest syntactic maturity of all his written work in the Language Institute.

During the interview with the Level IV instructor, I had asked her to describe Sasha as a student in her classroom. According to her, he was "unusually bright and always able to push the class forward with his questions and to help keep it on track."

Nevertheless, she believed that Sasha needed to focus more, since he had so many ideas and interests. She thought that setting time limits and giving positive feedback might work with balky students like Sasha. Ms. K. had given up nagging him for his compositions and had simply stated the consequences. She believed she recognized a pattern of behavior on his part to wait for the whole composition to be constructed in his head before he could write.

Some writing theorists have even divided writers into two categories: Mozartians who think it all out and then write and Beethovenians who keep revising, just as these two musicians did. Would it have been up to Sasha himself, he would have chosen to be a Mozartist, an icon for him. He even quotes Mozart in "How to Write a Composition" as someone who put in the exact number of notes needed, but not one more, just as should be done when writing a composition.

When I checked with Sasha about the teacher's perceptions of his writing process, he agreed that he had seen writing as a perfect final product rather than a process of constant revisions and corrections. Evidently he still had this perception during Level V when he could not produce a single written word for his instructor during the whole quarter.

Observing the writing process

To address the issue of Sasha's actual writing process, I have chosen three compositions he wrote while I was observing him: "Testimonial," written during Level IV and "Recommendation," written after Level V of the Language Institute. "Vietnam" was written for Truman College during a course comparable to Level VI.

There are also two other compositions written without my being an observant/participant, but which show interesting aspects of Sasha's writing process: "The Person Whom I Remember, Part III" from Level IV , "American Experience" and "Brownsville," both from Level VI at Truman College and "Final Exam II" from Level VII.

Student Testimonial

I had nominated Sasha for Outstanding Student Achievement for the Annual CAD Awards Ceremony in June of 1994. As part of the nominating process, Sasha had to write a testimonial of his personal growth as a music tutor. This provided me the first opportunity to observe Sasha as he was composing in a second language. Following is the brief statement Sasha wrote describing his work as a music tutor:

> During the tutoring sessions, I got to know how to pronounce musical terminology in English. I also improved my English generally speaking since I had to explain many things the students weren't able to understand. Preparing the Fall recital in Chicago campus, I had to learn many songs with students,

> explaining the mood of the piece, and the way it should be performed.

I was pleased to see him using such English phrases as "generally speaking." Most importantly, he was able to articulate how having to use what English he knew to communicate his musical knowledge had been beneficial to him. In the letter to his friend, Zhanna, we also saw how he enjoyed teaching in an area related to his specialty, that of music.

Sasha did not wish to share as much personal information as he might have chosen to do in the following section of his student profile:

> Volunteer work at the university was the way I got the job as a music tutor. My hobbies always have to do with my major. No matter how narrow-minded I might seem, I prefer to always improve my knowledge and skills in music by listening, playing it, and reading about the subject. Once I found myself in music, and since then, I feel the need to do everything to reach my goal.

These two sections of his "application" took approximately one hour in length. He was anxious to complete it and did not labor arduously over it. This is in sharp contrast to the composition process I was to observe later in the summer.

Level V Compositions

Since no compositions were attempted for Level V, Sasha received an Incomplete for the course. Even when extended time over the summer was offered to Sasha by his instructor, Sasha seemed unable or unwilling to complete his assignments.

One assigned topic was "An influential person in your life"; the other two topics were negotiable. Perhaps because he had spent so much time and energy in writing about his grandfather, who was obviously the most influential person in his life for Level IV, this topic was hardly challenging. He was also unwilling to negotiate a more interesting topic. The issue of topics for compositions will be addressed in my discussion.

As he pointed out later in his interviews (Appendix B), the more he learned about the English language, the harder it was to apply them (the rules). This is in sharp contrast to what he had written previously in Level IV in "How to write a composition." In that essay he had declared his victory over the "forest of trees" (grammar rules) he had entered. It too was transactional in purpose with the primary goal of conveying information. That his Level V instructor could not understand the problem Sasha was facing with his writing was unfortunate. It took me another year to come up with a possible explanation as well, which I shall take up later in my discussion of my data.

I would venture to guess that perhaps there was a reluctance on Sasha's part to show his inability to master all the elements of English at the same time, and with this instructor in particular because of the close relationship they had built. After all, hadn't this instructor praised Sasha in front of the whole class, calling him "the king" for his perfect test scores? And hadn't this very instructor told me that Sasha was far ahead of his classmates and was probably the smartest student in the whole school?

According to Sasha, they had spent many hours going over the exams after class and discussing general questions about the English language. When I told this instructor during my class observation that Sasha appreciated all the time he had given him, the instructor replied that he would have given anyone else so interested in learning English the same amount of attention. However, the one weakness he detected in Sasha was his inflexibility and his sense that he was certain he would be bored with upcoming class activities. Sasha was later to confirm that he had indeed found the Language Labs undeserving of his time and frequently skipped attending them.

Another factor that may have been involved was the fact that Sasha planned to transfer to Truman College, so he had no pressure to earn a grade at all in Level V. Many other factors were also allowed to interfere, such as painting an apartment for his landlord. Sasha discussed the problem he had had with writing in his retrospective interview (see Appendix B).

I began to study the question of writer's block and to formulate some hypotheses about this problem as it might apply to a second language learner. I assumed that the method of second language instruction may have played a role in Sasha's writing block.

Nevertheless, I was stunned to see that when Sasha found a purpose for writing, he was able to do so with intense, unflagging concentration hour after hour and day after day. I was able to watch this process for four days in August of 1994 as he composed a letter recommending me for tenure and promotion.

Was writer's block then a matter of topic and motivation, rather than an undue focus on correct grammar? I hoped that eventually this question would be answered in my study.

Letter of Recommendation

As a former student of mine, I had asked Sasha to write a letter of recommendation for me. All my other students had left for the summer and I needed something from a student. While it may appear self-serving to have "assisted" Sasha write a letter in my behalf, it was an opportunity for me to observe his writing process. I had no idea that it would become such an painstaking undertaking and I include it here only because it was such a revealing observation/collaboration of one student's second language writing process.

In order to write this letter of recommendation for promotion and tenure for me, Sasha read over three letters of recommendation from some of my colleagues in the middle of August, 1994. He then began to compose his own letter on my computer, asking that I not tape record his thoughts as he composed because it would have consumed too many tapes. In this he was all too correct.

Certainly when I sat next to Sasha at the computer, it was far easier for him to ask me about a word choice than it was to look it up in several dictionaries in a laborious process during which the original thought or flow could have been interrupted. However, every word in question was tested and re-tested, argued and debated over. It was not a matter of my supplying any words for him. Even with this 'dictionary step' eliminated, the process of composing this letter took nearly twenty hours all-told to compose 592 words in the proper sequence, rhythm and beat.

Versions 1-23

I tried to catch his revising process by printing out each revision. The composing of the first two paragraphs took approximately three hours.

I can give several examples of how determined Sasha was in conveying his own message and the very minor role I played in his composing process. For instance, in the first paragraph when I suggested that as a former student he might mention having already completed five levels at the Language Institute, he pointed out that the letter was supposed to be about me, not him. He rightly suggested that to include all that information would have made for too detailed a letter.

When I suggested that he include in his second sentence of the first paragraph that he had been recommended by another NLU student to become a music tutor for the CAD based on his previous voluntary tutoring of NLU music students, he again demurred. He turned his sentence into a simple recommendation for music tutor.

> I am a former student of National-Louis University. Last year, while taking ESL courses at the Language Institute, I was recommended to Ms. Kim, the Supplemental Instruction Coordinator, to be a tutor for the classes of "Introduction to Music."

An example of the care involved in retrieving and determining the exact meaning of a word can be illustrated with his concern over the word "constant." He was adamant about using "constant" to refer to my supervisory duties as the Coordinator of the S.I. Program. He wished to describe my important role as his mentor and only acquiesced to the use of the word "invaluable" after checking his new dictionary. He especially wanted to emphasize its (mentoring) quality by placing it at the end of the first sentence rather than within it.

> Over the course of the year, while I served as an SI Leader, Ms. Kim was my constant supervisor and

> invaluable mentor. Because of the length of time over which our association took place and on account of its quality, I am honored by the opportunity to strongly recommend Anna C. Kim for promotion and tenure.

When it came to the use of the word, "honor," Sasha wanted to make sure that it was not he who was being honored by the committee to whom he was writing, but only for the opportunity to speak of his mentor's qualities. This was a pretty fair indication to me that the syntax of the English language was understood and had been nearly mastered by this second language learner.

One week later, however, working on the third paragraph was entirely another matter. We had ended the first night in the middle of the first sentence in which he wanted to express the context of this relationship. In this paragraph, Sasha wished to describe the problems he was having when he first came here and why our relationship was so important to him at that time. Later, the sentence was completed as follows:

> When I first met Ms. Kim, I was encountering many problems having come from another country. Differences in cultures, mental attitudes, social, political, and econamic [sic] systems were letting themselves felt more and more dramatically. At that time, my acquaintance with such a person was offered as if a gift of the gods.

Three days later, Sasha spent four more hours on the third paragraph, revising it many times as he described his "problems" and my role as his supervisor. Because it contained several different main ideas, it would eventually be split into separate paragraphs.

One interesting comparison was his use of the word "collective" which I then suggested could be replaced by the word "staff" of the CAD. On the other hand, he used a very American phrase,..."there for me." These sentences were also added to the third paragraph.

In Version #8, Sasha began to edit out his original statements with a pen in the third paragraph. Like the musician he is, Sasha read aloud each revision and each sentence to ascertain its fluidity and rhythm. We had argued over using "It was she" twice in the same paragraph. (The following paragraph shows this paragraph before it was split into two separate paragraphs.) He insisted that it would change the tone color if he were to change the second sentence to "It was Ms. Kim." He used "her" instead.

> It was she who integrated/incorporated me in the staff of the CAD, recognized my expertise in the field of music, and believed in my capabilities as a tutor and teacher, although I had just completed level two and was unsure of my abilities in English. It was her professionalizm(sic) and ________________. It was she who always collaborated with me in preparing my lessons and observed my teaching, helping me express myself in English more completely. In fact, Ms. Kim was always able to understand in advance what I tried to convey and was tactfully "there for me" when it was needed.

In fact, in version #13, Sasha later added a third "It was she" to the fourth paragraph.

> It was she, in fact, believing in my capabilities... It was she who, attending my sessions...It was she who collaborated..."

but the final version had only two such sentences.

> It was she who, attending my sessions, first recognized my musical proficiency.... It was she who actively collaborated as I prepared my lessons.

He had also added "actively" before "collaborated."

Taking my suggestion, Sasha decided to move the phrase "gift of gods," to a later paragraph, since it was appearing too early in the composition and had been offered without adequate "proof" of the statement. He added "and natural talent to find an individualized approach in working with me" after "professionalism."

To emphasize and provide further proof for his statements at the end of this paragraph he also added, "All this great effort was accomplished willingly and with a generosity of spirit." Later, Sasha added the phrase, "and natural talent to find an individualized approach in working with me" after "professionalism" in describing me. After the phrase "there for me," Sasha also inserted "as the occasion demanded/the need arose" for later editing.

A major change in the third paragraph was made when Sasha decided to switch the wording of the first sentence. Now he was using the last part of the first sentence as the beginning. "Coming from another country, I was encountering many problems..." served as a marker for all subsequent versions. He also relegated a discussion of his "problems" to a later paragraph.

> Coming from another country, I was encountering many problems when I first met Ms. Kim. For one thing, until that time, I hadn't had a job in the U.S.

> Now, in addition to getting one, I had a chance to work in the area of music. For another matter, I got an excellent opportunity to practice and improve my English skills, especially in my field of expertise. Such a turn of events/confluence of circumstances was certainly a significant occurrence in my new life.

During all sessions, much time was devoted to reading the letter aloud for cadence. The phrase, "for one thing" was discussed at great length. He felt that using "for one thing," "now," and "for another matter" to begin three sentences in the same paragraph made for choppy reading. Another "also" was added for the sake of rhythm before "got an excellent opportunity."

He did not want to repeat "university" which had appeared in the first sentence of the first paragraph. He also wanted to insert "belief in me" at the end of the first paragraph to make the second paragraph more "logical" (a favorite word of Sasha's.)

> Even though I had just completed level two, Ms. Kim, believing in my learning potential as much as my teaching capabilities, helped me successfully integrate into the staff of the CAD.

One week after it was first written, we began to change the third paragraph again. One of Sasha's goals was to stress the importance of the job itself; that it was in the field of his expertise and finally that practicing his English was a second advantage. He also added "and it was all made possible under Ms. Kim's supervision" after "my new life."

> Such a turn of events/confluence of circumstances was certainly a significant occurrence in my new life, and it was all made possible under Ms. Kim's supervision.

In order to elucidate those qualities of a professional Sasha wished to describe, he next wanted to bring in my work with ESL students.

> In truth (later changed to 'fact') Ms. Kim was always able to understand far in advance what I tried to convey--a trait vital to those who work with ESL students.

This was followed by the "there for me" and the "generosity of spirit" sentences seen in paragraph #3 in earlier versions before the paragraph "split."

In paragraph #5, Sasha addressed my role as a mentor who had helped assimilate him into the American way of life. He again picks up on his original theme, that of the problems he had faced as a new immigrant.

> This, in turn, led to a warm relationship on a more personal level. At one point, Ms. Kim had actually become somewhat of a mentor in the midst of my travails. Having had a lot of experience in working with foreign students, she helped me assimilate into American life, begin to understand a new political, economic, and social system, and become aware of the cultural differences.

He later added a last sentence to this paragraph, " She advised me about personal concerns regarding financial, medical, vocational, and educational matters."

In paragraph #6, Sasha described activities of a more academic nature to show my role as a teacher.

> Also significant was the fact that Ms. Kim devoted a whole lot of time supplementing my English instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and, of course, speaking. ...ln the process, my vocabulary would be significantly enhanced, which eventually resulted in my long-sought facility to write in English...

We can certainly see how Sasha's voice can be heard despite the limitations of a letter format. He had set his goals, that of helping me attain tenure through the written word, and tried his utmost to achieve them. Up until he had completed the final exam in Level VII at Truman College, Sasha had considered this composition his finest effort--a work of art.

According to Britton's (1975) classification of writing functions, Sasha's letter of recommendation was transactional. It was conative in purpose, since he wished to persuade his reading audience (other faculty members) of my fitness to be awarded tenure. He was very aware of this audience when he insisted that the content of the letter stress my contributions rather than any description of himself.

What had hindered me as a participant/observer when I tried to help Sasha's writing process was the fact that his outline was in his mind, not on paper. [This was in contrast to his answer on the Writing Questionnaire discussed in Chapter VI and Appendix A.] He most definitely seemed to have a goal since he was able to focus on it hour after hour, day after day over the course of a week.

Actually, some writers are hampered by a formal outline which breaks their flow of thought. In this sense, Sasha is probably a Mozartian! This will become more apparent when I discuss Sasha's Final Exam II composition from Truman College at the end of this chapter.

It also appears that once Sasha decides to tackle a writing project he finds worthy of pursuing, such as the testimonial on his grandfather, he is unstinting in the effort he puts forth, often to the dismay of the observer. Because of the amount of time that is involved and the depth to which each aspect of writing is mined, it is hardly surprising that he often balks at the task of putting his thoughts into writing. [These behaviors are described in his own words in Chapter VI and Appendix A under Writing Questionnaire.]

Because he had put so much effort into my recommendation, I wrote a letter to his Level V instructor asking that Sasha be given credit for his missing assignments. However, since the time limit for these compositions had not been met, my request on Sasha's behalf was denied. Despite the fact that he had earned nearly perfect scores on his written exams, especially in the area of grammar, he received a "No credit" for the course.

Post Level V--Truman College

Sasha's need for perfection and his inability to produce writing on demand can be illustrated when he was in his second term at Truman College in the Spring of 1995. He was asked to describe his American experience which he did as follows:

> America has always been a country of freedom and numerous possibilities or so it usually seemed in the country where I'm coming from. For hundreds of years, people from all over the world have been immigrating to this land of democracy, trying to escape from their domestic persecutions. Many of them would find better lives and become better off arriving here. Some wouldn't be satisfied, realizing that this society has its own disadvantages and is also full of contradictions. Still, the myth that this country is a country of great possibilities and the place where everyone can make his dream(s) come true/become reality has not been proved. As a result, hundreds of thousands of new comers [sic] arrive to the United States every year.
>
> I wasn't an exception and landed at Chicago almost two years ago. However, it is really worthy of bringing up--at least in the framework of this essay--that it is a real challenge to come to this country. (Had I some more time left, I would gladly support my statement.)

This comment shows how Sasha had run out of time because of his slow, painstaking pace of writing. By including his parenthetical remark at the end of his paper, he attempted to inform the instructor that he was capable of producing more writing, but had been unable to show what he really knew because he lacked the time needed to do so. It is also obvious that his instructor did not buy his argument in her written reply as she predicted almost ominously that he "would learn to write under pressure."

Since most of the compositions at Truman are completed in the classroom, Sasha did eventually learn to write under pressure. According to his retrospective interviews (Appendix B), he has accepted the fact that he can lower his high standards for writing and now relishes the opportunity to show his "absolute knowledge" within an established time frame. This too will stand him in good stead as he faces similar writing tasks within the academic setting.

Sasha even chides himself for having had a writer's block in Level V and being unable to produce compositions for his instructor. His "lack of courage" and fear of making mistakes may not have been of his own making, as much as he would like to believe it was. Perhaps, instead, it was a result of an emphasis on correctness of form during instruction.

VIETNAM

"Vietnam" was an action narrative that Sasha seemed to have enjoyed writing at Truman College. In preparing himself to write this essay, Sasha first made out a vocabulary sheet. This pre-writing activity on the part of Sasha gives an indication of the steps involved in his writing process.

The following vocabulary words were used or discarded in "Vietnam." According to Britton et al's. (1975)

classification, it is a generalized narrative. Sasha would have no background knowledge at all other than the video the class was shown to prepare them for this writing assignment. I have included this composition, since I was able to observe him as he was composing parts of it.

Sasha and his classmates had the choice of using the video as a jumping-off point for a chapter of a book, a newspaper article, or an essay on the problems of orphans and homelessness. This helps account for the words he prepared for himself, but not always utilized in his composition.

Vocabulary preparation sheet

steal
hide
jump over
relief
confident
lost
short
police
not knowing
types or kinds of people

peek out
shout
chase
sadness
independent
look around
poor--blown
half-breed orphan

looking for/search for
poor
smile
run through the streets
he looks shrewd
swift-to move quickly
many times--they don't care
market security
results of the war

It was evident that he was trying to describe the protagonist as he was portrayed in the video in his first draft.

> A young Asian guy entered the alley. He had that type of face which the local inhabitant would label "a mixture."

"The face of destiny" was another phrase he had saved on his notes. However, as he reported later, he thought it was too wordy.

A second draft was as follows:

> A yound [sic] of medium stature man rapidly entered the alley. As he was approaching to (sallow complexion). He had that type of face because of which the local inhabitant would maliciously label him "a mixture." The eyes, slightly touched by the Asian narrowness, eloquently betrayed his interracial background.
>
> He was incessantly/constantly/continually looking round as he was approaching to the nearest garbage container/dustbin, though he was expecting somebody to appear. Finally, he quit, sitting down next to an old tire and biting his half-peeled orange. All of a sudden the alley was entered by two police officers and an old dressed-all-in-brown, market-woman, who was with fervor pointing at the youth.
> The sound of cbuka was heard and, in a twinking, the chase/pursuit in full swing started.

Most apparent from his drafts are the choices of words he has left out. Upon reading his final production, I had wondered why he had not described the protagonist and the old peddler woman in greater detail. It appears that he started to do so, but believed that it might detract from the action story line.

Version #1 (One hour and ten minutes)

Sasha began by asking me the word to describe an opening to a courtyard. Responding to the shape he indicated, I supplied the word, "archway." In describing his protagonist, Sasha is placing his descriptive phrases in front of his nouns. This indicates quite clearly that he is translating from his native Russian language.

> A young, of medium height, man hastily entered the archway of an old yet tidy courtyard. His dashing steps abruptly answered with dozens of their co-brothers, reverberating in the versatile echo of the vault.

The choice of words that Sasha was able to retrieve from his Russian-English dictionary, such as "dashing steps" and "co-brothers" give a slightly exotic effect to the narrative, which may be excused for good second language writers like Sasha who capture the style of their culture.

> Proceeding further into the passageway and looking behind quite frequently, he suddenly felt himself in a certain zone of the clashing of two aerial spheres: one, filled with the barely struggling through the taciturnity of the passage noise of the street bustle, was behind him; the other one, so strongly pressing with the vacuum of absolute silence, was no longer in front but around him, gradually enveloping with that new deafness.

Here again, the words, "aerial spheres" and "taciturnity" demonstrate Sasha's struggles at describing in English the varying sounds he wished to convey in the setting for his story. He had spent many minutes explaining what he had in mind and looking up the words in his dictionary. It was clear that he was trying to be literary and poetic in trying to separate the noises of the street from the silence of the courtyard. Being a musician, his interest in sounds is not unusual.

Version #2 (25 minutes)

In this version, Sasha has corrected the word order of the first sentence and added a verb to the second sentence. He has also switched "struggling" to "surviving" noise and changed "around him" to "already surrounding him."

> A young man of medium height hastily entered the archway of an old yet tidy courtyard. His dashing steps were abruptly answered...the barely surviving noise of the street bustle through the taciturnity of the arch, was behind him.

Version #3 (10 minutes)

Here Sasha was interested in describing how the variation in sounds from the street to the inner courtyard affected his protagonist.

> The latter phenomenon appeared to be the cause of an utterly striking acoustic impression, filling the youth with an exceptional feeling of comfort and safety.

Version #4 (20 minutes)

The last sentence of the first paragraph finds the protagonist finally entering the courtyard:

> He stopped,...looked behind for the last time, and exited the cool archway.

Version #5 (10 minutes)

Sasha now changes the word order of the third sentence:

> ...a certain zone where two aerial spheres were clashing:

He also changes "barely surviving noise" to "distant noises."   "Filling the youth" becomes "filled our protagonist."

Version #6 10/16/94 (five hours)

Sasha reported that he had spent five hours composing the first sentence of the second paragraph in Russian at home:

> The high, afternoon sun was generously presenting the courtyard with a blindingly white light yet not all of it, only the part which was remaining not shaded by the old brick building situated directly across from that exit.

Version #7 (20 minutes)

Again we see in the word order how Sasha is translating directly from the Russian as he writes...

> Sensing the undesirable possibility of losing control over the situation, he hurried into the shadow of that very same, situated in front of him building, where it was the time for him to discover the already familiar to us alley entrance.

Version #8 (20 minutes)

Now Sasha has added another phrase to the sentence above:

> ...entrance as well as a huge garbage can and a truck tire lying next to it.   He nervously peeled the orange, throwing the skin into the tire ring rather than the can, and had enjoyed only one piece of it when screams broke forth from the archway.   An old fruit peddler was angrily pointing at him, getting the two policemen who were hardly keeping up with her to start pursuing the youth.

The composing process which I was actively observing ended here; the rest of this composition was completed at home. A few comments on the rest of the composition follow:

> the "pursuited" was already running down the alley, leaving the adjacent courtyard far behind him....In order to avoid a big wash tub, he swiftly grabbed and catapulted from the suddenly appearing in front of him cross-beam.

Note the negative transfer or overgeneralizing of the verb "pursue" to "pursuited" and the description of the cross-beam which precedes it.

Sasha injected humor and more pungent descriptions of his subjects in the next paragraph:

> The territory was adjoining the backyard of a cheap, two-story motel and was full of old laundresses, who started shouting at the pursuited for disturbing their work. He quickly, not paying any attention to the prostitutes standing by the rail, climbed over it and, without much thinking, leaped, first, on a big barrel and, then, to the ground.

What had started out as a strange and exotic setting had degenerated into a Keystone Cops scenario complete with angry washerwomen and bawdy ladies of the night.

Brownsville

The writing class at Truman College appeared to me to be more of a creative writing class than a typical class for second language learners. At first I believed that this assignment would be too difficult for a second language student. However, by the end of the second year of this study, I am beginning to see that this may have been the very answer to Sasha's writing block. He later admitted that he had enjoyed writing this composition for its technical qualities.

The instructor had asked her students to write a personal story of one of the citizens of Brownsville. They were to choose between three main ideas they would develop and were provided a set of cartoons depicting changes between 1950 and 1985 from a rural to an urban setting.

Students were to compose at least three body paragraphs using transition words, and provide an introduction. Noting details in the cartoons was one of the goals of the exercise. Another was the use of irregular verbs and the past tense.

One comment written by Sasha on the page of cartoons was a cryptic "cocka-doodle-do." Another was a main idea that was not provided by the instructor, 'Modernization of Brownsville has brought some disadvantages.' (This evidently was Sasha's attempt to paraphrase one of the instructor's main ideas, "In just 35 years, the natural environment of Brownsville has been destroyed.")

Sasha was very proud of his efforts at writing in a linear "Western" rhetorical style. He reports that it took him seven hours to compose it at home, since he had had to look up every word. His first draft was as follows:

> Today, the Brown's Village is one of the most quickly developing cities in the country. The two giant factories have made it an important industrial center of the region as well as the area of the most

> polution [sic]. More than 80% of the working people in the city are ingaged [sic] in the industry, and all the 28,000 population breathes in the harmful smoke.
>
> However, it wasn't always like that. Mr. Brown, a former farmer of this place who is now seventy-six, says that 35 years ago everything was different. "I was literally forced to leave the homeland of mine and my ancestors," he complains. "Over the course of 30 years, I was watching the nature being destroyed.
>
> First, the river perished. Than, a little by little, the hundreds of fruit-bearing trees were felled, and the dosens [sic] of acres of fertile soil were buried under the tons of cement. The originally fresh and clean air was spoiled by the poisoning scrap."

The version Sasha turned in completely fulfilled the requirements of the instructor. This composition was assessed as having an "excellent use of vocabulary and sentence structure." "Very good organization" was also noted.

I will provide the title and a small portion of the introduction to his final draft which will answer the question of the mystifying 'cocka-doodle-do' notation:

> The Industrialization of Brownsville Has Led to the Complete Destruction of the Local Natural Environment
>
> It was one of the early mornings of the summer of nineteen sixty nine. The chief rooster on the Browns' farm had just gotten up and was sitting on the fence, warming up his sleepy voice for the morning "cock-a-doodle-doo." He was constantly glancing in an easterly direction, awaiting the first rays of the rising sun to illuminate the horizon. However, his preparation wasn't very successful due to the fact that his head was full of gloomy thoughts, and his heart, overfilled with sadness was pounding with anxiety....In less than a year, the poor bird served as the basis for bouillon, and in ten more years, Mr. Brown himself was

> literally forced to leave the homeland of his and his forefathers.

Sasha again provides a small dose of humor while describing the destruction of a small town to civilization.

Was Sasha's instructor correct in predicting that he would learn to write under pressure? I myself was totally surprised that Sasha was able to do so by the end of the Spring Quarter.

Final Exam II

In Final Exam II, Sasha's class was given a choice to two topics; he chose to write about a boss's attitude and its effect on the workplace environment. Within a timeframe of one and one-half hours, with the plan in his head, he was able to write smoothly at top speed and produce six pages of text "with only six errors [counted by his instructor]."

His organizational style was comparison/contrast, beginning with his unpleasant work environment at his first job as a conductor at the state university in Ukraine to his more pleasant experiences at NLU, Northwestern, and with the University of Iowa.

> He was a very difficult person, and many of my days at work were saddened by him. However, here in America, I have finally learned that it's not always that you have unpleasant experiences with bosses. On the contrary, they can be very pleasant and enjoyable once his/her attitude towards you is positive....

> Another example of how my American bosses have had a good influence on me is Mr. H., a very talented musician, great pianist, and also a teacher for NLU's Department of Music and Theater. Last fall...he invited me to work for the Northwestern University Dance School as an accompanist for the ballet students....My boss...took care of a newcomer and has been mentoring me for all this time.
>
> He has also advised me on my career and education, provided me with the music scores for the classes, and most importantly, given me a lot of encouragment [sic] in my work with sometimes capricous dancers. We, newcomers, often like to generalize that Americans are cold and uncaring about others, but these experiences of mine just prove the opposit [sic].

I counted 19 errors which amounted to 2.37 errors per 100 words with the use of a dictionary. There were 39 T-units, with an average of 22.3 words per T-unit and 1.90 clauses per T-unit.

He received a "pass" from two readers and a comment of "excellent." He ranks it as his finest accomplishment thus far in English writing. "I was in total control of what I was doing; the process of writing. I had a plan and I stuck to it. It was very simple [the topic] and the plan. I wrote it fast; it flowed."

The fact that it had flowed may be attributed in part to the fact that the organization and topic were similar to that of his letter of recommendation for me.

In a later interview, Sasha evaluated this composition as being "competent, not excellent. It was boring; there was no time for emotions, to express myself fully. I just gave some information and some distant evaluation."

Here Sasha's desire to be expressive and poetic in his writing but his inability to do so within the timeframe of the exam are again revealed. What had Sasha learned about the writing process itself?

Sasha now believes that he "should not think too much; to get too involved and emotional. I want to express my gratitude by the quality of writing; not just stating information. By letting the reader actually feel it by the use of language; by being honest."

While these two paragraphs may appear at first to indicate some inconsistency in his thinking, especially about not having to think during his writing process, later interviews with Sasha allow me to explain his viewpoint. Being an artist, he wishes to express his emotions, but realizes that it is better to be more distant and objective when he writes. This would ultimately allow the reader to understand the emotions beneath the words, since he has often stated that reading consists of reading "between the lines" (Appendix A).

In Chapter VI and Appendix B, Sasha reads from Shostokovich's Memoirs in which he described music as being something to be understood between the notes. What Sasha may be trying to say is that in order to reach his goal of a Western rhetorical style of writing, he must rein in his tendency to become emotional and poetic, characteristic of a more Russian tradition of writing. This is because he perceives English writing as being concise, linear, and straigtforward. Sasha believes that he understands this difference and is trying to conform to another style of writing, albeit reluctantly.

The great sea change that has occurred in Sasha's attitudes towards Americans over the course of two years in Final Exam II is thus revealed in his writings and from observations on my part and his other mentors. He has developed from a rather aloof and somewhat suspicious young man to a more open and relaxed individual. Perhaps his style of writing will reflect his new personality, just as one outside reader has hoped he would.

Where previously I had to accompany him on his interviews, he is now able to venture out on his own and make various contacts. Thus he has blossomed under the tutelage of his various mentors. The process of acculturation of this young man has indeed been a joy to watch for all of us.

It is also evident now that Sasha actually practices those strategies that he has indicated on his questionnaires (Chapter VI) and in his interviews (Appendixes A and B) that he does while reading and writing in a second language. However, nothing can quite replace or describe all the activities and interactions between the subject, his dictionaries, and the observer which occurs during Sasha's writing process than actually sitting beside a subject as he/she toils at the computer.

For one thing, the process is far more involved, painful, deliberate, argumentative, puzzling, and frustrating than can be envisioned. It is also obvious that Sasha understands that writing does not involve producing one final product, but that it is an evolving process of editing, revamping, deleting, adding, switching, elaborating, simplifying, listening for the rhythm of, and then revising again.

CHAPTER 6

WRITING IN THE CONTEXT OF READING

It has become very obvious that one cannot consider writing development without touching upon its relationship to reading. In Sasha's case, his perception was that reading in a second language was a prerequisite and precursor to his second language writing development. His perceptions of his language development in both reading and writing were assessed by way of questionnaires, error analyses, read-alouds and interviews. These were then compared to answers elicited from other second language students from the Language Institute.

Reading Questionnaire

Twelve students from the Communication Development course which follows Level V of the Language Institute completed the Reading Questionnaire (Appendix C). By comparing their answers ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always) with those of Sasha's on the same questionnaire, I was able to determine if Sasha could be considered typical of other Language Institute students. Selected items were analyzed from the Reading Questionnaire (Table 8).

Table 8 indicates what knowledge and strategies were considered to be most important for the second language students. It also tapped into their own perceptions of their second language abilities.

From Sasha's answers to the questionnaire, it appears that he is not always typical of most Language Institute students. He was most different in ranking knowledge of the grammar rules as being very important. Only one-third of the respondents put as much emphasis on this aspect of reading comprehension. We know from later interviews (Appendix B) that Sasha is very focussed on his second language goals and how best to reach them.
Sasha also described having the background knowledge of the topic as very important. This requirement was similarly ranked by only one-third of the respondents.

Sasha was lower than the average in assessing the importance of correct accents and spelling and with sharing ideas with others. This may have reflected his private nature or the fact that he may have considered himself far ahead of his classmates in language development.

However, this feeling of superiority was not evident when he ranked his speaking, listening, reading and writing ability in English. He listed listening as his best skill,

Table 8

Reading Questionnaire

1 = Never, not important
7 = Always, very important

Selected items:

N=13		case study	AV	Med
p.7 I #11 a. rules	4 4 4 4 6 4 3 7 4 7 5 7	7	5	4
f. spell.	5 2 7 3 6 3 1 4 7 1 4 6	2	4	4
g. sharing	3 3 7 3 5 6 3 4 4 5 2 4	2	4	4
h. bkgnd.	5 5 7 3 5 3 7 5 1 7 3 3	7	4	5
j. transl.	5 4 6 2 5 4 7 1 4 1 2 4	5	4	4
p.11 #1 yrs. U.S.	1 2 15 1 2 2 1 1 2 5 1 2	1	3	2
p.13 II #11 rank Eng. lang.	3 2 4 2 3 3 2 4 3 3 3 3	2	3	3
#15. rank lang. abilities				
a.Spk.	3 4 1 4 4 4 3 4 3 3 3 3	2	3	3
b. List.	4 3 4 1 2 2 2 3 1 4 4 1	1	2	2
c. Rdg.	1 1 2 2 3 1 1 2 2 2 2 2	3	2	2
d. Writ.	2 3 3 1 3 4 1 4 1 1 4	4	2	2

speaking the second, reading his third and writing the last.

This ranking was verified later as I observed his language development over the course of two years. Because of his musical background, listening was indeed his highest skill. His personality may also have contributed to his strength in the area of verbal skills.

Interestingly enough, Sasha's classmates ranked their reading and writing abilities higher than listening and speaking. This may have been due to a problem with the word "rank," although this questionnaire had been used successfully at the University of Arizona. Moreover, the audio-lingual method used at the Language Institute to teach second language to these students might have been expected to have elicited more positive rankings for speaking and listening.

Out of a total of 100 points, Sasha also believed that reading most improved his skill in grammar and structure (35 points) and writing ability (15 points). These perceptions were later triangulated with his retrospective interviews and found to be consistent.

Sasha ranked grammar exercises as the major focus of the Language Institute program, followed by vocabulary/reading strategies, discussion of topics, writing, and pronunciation. This corresponds to the interviews and curriculum I was given by the Chair and one of the faculty members of the Language Institute.

Vocabulary

The section dealing with vocabulary was especially interesting. Sasha indicated he would feel very uncomfortable (6) depending on how many words he didn't understand. He almost always (6) looks up unfamiliar words in the dictionary (see also Appendix B).

Although he relates the current reading to his personal experience of what he already knows about the topic (7), he seldom (3) guesses what the following part will say. In a later interview, he indicated that guessing is being lazy and that he recommends to his friends when he writes to them that they must learn to look up all unfamiliar words (see Appendix B).

Translating Into Native Language

Interestingly enough, as a second language learner, Sasha nearly always tries to translate what he is reading into his own language (6), since his current stage of language development precluded using and thinking in English.

Sasha underlines interesting or important ideas as he reads (7), and makes a list of unfamiliar words to study later (7). (See Appendix C.) He always checks to see if he understands what he is reading and rereads, slows down, guesses at the meaning using the context or guesses based on what he knows about the topic (7 for all).

His recommendation for someone from his own country who was trying to improve reading was to read a lot, learn a lot and everywhere, take advantage of being in this country in close contact with English speakers.

It appears from his answers that Sasha perceived his reading ability in English to be poor or limited. This hardly corresponded with his fluent and nearly flawless oral reading of a text of his own choosing which will be described in a following section of this chapter.

When Sasha evaluated the purposes he had for reading, he gave 50 points for finding specific information related to my particular interest or major field of study and 30 points to improving English language ability. This left only 10 points each for entertainment and general information. Having interviewed Sasha later (Appendix B), I can say that Sasha was accurate in the way he weighted his reading purposes on the Reading Questionnaire.

Burke Interview Modified for Older Readers

I taped and transcribed the Burke Interview which Sasha took in May of 1994 in its entirety (Appendix A). His assessment of his reading practices in Russia and the way he compares the two languages of English and Russian are especially interesting.

For instance, when he reads in Russian, he compares it to how it would sound in English. Since Sasha has to think three times before speaking in English, he now has the same tendency when he speaks in Russian. Therefore, he has gotten more accurate. He goes on as follows:

Contrastive Rhetoric

> This tendency for the grammar, the meaning, to have the shortest way to saying the same thing, the easiest way to say something, the most understandable, the most logical.
>
> Here in English you are saying many things pretty simple, exactly, to that point you want to reach. It seems sometimes too simple, too dry, but I like the tendency, the trend to be very careful with your language, to be as short as you can in length. This mix of American tendency to make everything as short as possible to make it more attractive, not dry, this is what I would like to improve in my Russian [after] having the experience of learning English.

We see that Sasha has compared the rhetorical styles of his native and second languages. Not only is he willing to adapt his English writing into the concise and accurate style espoused by writers of English, but he wishes to change his Russian writing to a similar style.

This change in attitude also applies to his reading. It appears that Sasha was not able to fully appreciate what he had read in Russia. "I couldn't understand it in Russian, about souls; so strange, so long. And I have to read it; I like to read Pushkin, to read stories. Now I can appreciate the way it's written and enjoy it; maybe much more than the story [itself].

"This is what I would like to go, to feel as I am beginning to feel American. What they are, to feel how they are, to project, talking about literature."

Transfer Between Languages

What this means is that Sasha is not transferring from his native language so much as he hopes to transfer back to his native language what he has learned from acquiring his second language. According to the theory of Interlanguage described in Chapter II, this could be called a case of"positive reverse transfer." It also demonstrates what I believe to be the uniqueness and atypicality of my case study subject in that he could take the concept of transfer between languages one step further and in a reverse direction.

Early Reading

In naming a special book he had read as a child, Sasha mentioned a book about Sherlock Holmes. "I watched the movie maybe eight, ten [times]. Then for the first time I was interested in reading. I remember seventeen times I read the book when I was in eight grade and I enjoyed that." This statement demonstrates a characteristic of Sasha to always plumb the depths of anything that really interests him almost to an excess.

When asked what the most difficult thing was that he has read in English, he named a memoir of Shostakovich that he had selected. He complained that the story was much simpler than the Preface which is a critique of Shostokovich's time.

Reading Aloud from a Self-Selected Text

One summer day, Sasha brought a book from the library and began to read the Preface aloud to me. I was stunned at his excellent oral reading and pronunciation, just as the interviewers had been for Sasha's Oral Interviews in the Language Institute (Appendix A). After all, Sasha had completed only five quarters of second language instruction when he read this book aloud for me.

These memoirs were edited by Volkov, translated into English, and published in New York by Harper & Row in 1979. The audiotape of Sasha's oral reading is transcribed in full in Appendix A. He chose to read the Preface aloud to me to explain anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and why Shostokovich opposed it:

> I think when we speak of musical impressions that Jewish folk music has made a most powerful impression on me...it's multifaceted; it can appear to be happy when it is most tragic. It's almost always laughter through tears.
>
> There should always be two layers in music; Jews were tormented for so long that they learned to hide their despair. They expressed their despair in dance music; Jewish folk music is unique. Many of my works reflect my impression of Jewish folk music.

Contrastive Analysis by Case Study Subject

When I shared with Sasha a letter I had received from my former teacher of Russian as a Second Language in St. Petersburg, he took it as an opportunity to perform some contrastive analysis for my benefit (Appendix B).

Reading it aloud as he had with the book on Shostakovich, he explained why Lena, my former teacher, wrote her English sentences in the way she did. That is, there was negative transfer from her native language of Russian at this stage of her English language writing development.

For example, Sasha interpreted "Sorry, I have no letters from you long time" [from the letter] as "a very vivid, bright example of how Russians write....She meant she is being sorry for the fact that she hadn't had any letters from you for a long time. This [sentence] is mostly said in Russian by using English words....I can explain the nature of them [errors] because I'm walking the same way in learning the language...."

Sasha's second language development had progressed to the point that he could scarcely read aloud the words she had written. He understood that direct translation from Russian into English made the meanings the writer intended to convey opaque to someone unfamiliar with the word order and colloquialisms of the Russian language.

Sasha displayed his knowledge of English grammar as he analyzed one of her short sentences. "I have been doma [home], Petersburg."

Sasha explained it as follows: "I've been at home." (She's not at home now and she hasn't been recently. She had been; she's in Korea now while writing letter. She didn't know that she had to use past perfect [tense]. By that time that was over, a finished action, so she could [have] use[d] "I was at home.")

"Why didn't she put 'for over one and a half months? In Russian, we do not use 'for.' We do not have a preposition. We just say, 'She were doing that.' She have been doing that...so the woman is thinking in Russian while she is writing in English." To have a contrastive analysis from the perspective of a native language speaker makes it possible to understand errors of transfer from one language to another.

Retrospective Interview on Reading

During the month of May, 1995 Sasha emphasized the importance of reading for writing in English (Appendix B). "Americans who love to do everything simple, linear and plain; you get exactly the examples of usage in your reading."

He also explained the importance of learning the grammar of a second language. "Each acquaintance with any grammar pattern is useful, very important while reading....That's why I can read. It's better than those who do know more vocabulary because structures sometimes say more than vocabulary."

Writing Questionnaire

Forty-seven second language students from the Language Institute of National Louis University taking Communication Development after Level V of the Language Institute were administered the Writing Questionnaire (Appendix C). The answers to some of the questions dealing with attitudes, perceptions, and aptitudes were again compared to those Sasha had given in order to determine if he was representative of the average ESL (English as a second language) student. (See Table 9.)

I taped Sasha's verbal answers as he was filling out the Writing Questionnaire (Appendix B). I will point out some major findings from Sasha's answers, both verbal and written, to the questionnaire. Other questions about Sasha's writing development can be read in the transcripts about the composing process, errors, topics, instruction in Appendix B.

Sasha's answers on the Writing Questionnaire were basically the same as his classmates' in half the areas selected, but he was different in several other significant areas. On a scale from 1 to 7, "1" being never and "7" being always, Sasha answered in the affirmative (7) for four areas. Unlike some of his classmates, Sasha always (7) thinks of ways to answer an essay question and writes them down. Unlike his peers, however, he only likes writing for himself.

Table 9

Writing Questionnaire

1=Never 7=Always N=47

Page	No.	Question	Av. Ans. NLU	Case Study NLU
1	8	Read each part of essay question	5	6
1	9	Think of ways to answer	5	7
2	10	Write down ideas	3	7
	11	Create map or outline	3	6
	12	Write ideas in native lang.	2	5
	13	Discouraged at looking up words	3	1
	15	Trouble with English mechanics	3	1
	16	Trouble with English punctuation	3	1
	17	Difficulty with plurals	2	5
	18	Articles give me trouble	3	4
	19	Pronouns are hard for me	3	1
	20	Problems with subject-verb agreement	2	1
	22	Do not worry about mechanics	2	6
	23	Write for meaning; edit later	3	1
3	25	Like to write about my experiences	3	1
	26	Enjoy writing reaction to reading	3	1
	30	Only like writing for myself	2	7

Table 9 (cont.)

1=Never 7=Always N=47

Page	No.	Question	Av Ans. NLU	Case Study NLU	Case Study Trum
3	31	Emphasis on correct grammar made writing difficult	4	6	2
	32	Topics assigned despite interests	3	3	6
	33	Allowed to free write on own topics	3.5	3	1
	34	Model compositions given	3.5	2	6
	35	Sentence-combining in class	4	7	3
	36	Scales/criteria good writing	4	3	1
	37	Details required for personal experiences	3	1	7
	38	Examined data to support our generalizations	4	2	2
	39	Analyzed ethical problems	3	2	5
	40	Developed arguments about ethical problems	3	2	4

As for second language instruction at Truman College, details were always required when writing about personal experiences, while at National-Louis, sentence-combining was always practiced in class.

Equally interesting is the fact that Sasha was different from his classmates when he indicated never (1) in ten areas; 1) getting discouraged looking up vocabulary words,; 2) having difficulty with plurals; 3) worrying about the mechanics of English writing; 4) writing for meaning; 5) writing about his experiences; 6) writing about his reactions to something he has read; 7) writing letters to friends; 8) keeping a diary, 9) reading what his classmates have written and 10) being allowed to free-write.

I will discuss those areas that were most significant to this study. Surprisingly, Sasha never becomes discouraged because he has to look up words as he writes. He never has trouble with English mechanics, punctuation or grammar [since he indicated in his interviews that once he has the rules, they are his forever]. Neither does he have trouble with English word order and question formation. In fact, he admitted that he enjoyed grammar, spelling and material things.

Yet Sasha almost always (6) worries about his spelling! "I'm sometimes losing my thoughts because I am in this dirt; in quotation marks, of grammar, spelling."

Most discouraging was the fact that Sasha never "wrote for meaning and edited later." Significantly, Sasha added additional information in writing after this question. "This is the problem why sometimes I have difficulties following my thoughts and plan." He explained orally that " I write for meaning in Russian, but when I write in English, no, never."

He did not like to write about his experiences nor enjoy writing his reactions to what he has read. He added to the Writing Questionaire that he did not even like to talk [about his experiences or reactions to what he has read], since he was a private person. "I prefer to write narratives."

This answer could help explain why he seemed to enjoy the process of writing narratives, such as "Vietnam" and "Brownsville" for Truman College and "Part III of Person Whom I Remember" in Level IV at National. He added verbally that he was talking about his grandfather in "Person," but he was doing it for himself.

This is a consideration that teachers of English composition should keep in mind when instructing second language students. In some cultures, it is not deemed appropriate to write and discuss personal feelings, so some students may have difficulty with such assignments. This is similar to what Moore (1990) found in his student from Bangladesh described earlier in the literature review.

On the Writing Questionnaire, Sasha indicated he was sometimes a poor writer because of his vocabulary. "It's still hard to think and write in English. It's better for me to think in Russian, write in Russian and then to translate into English. I do what I can do."

This strategy was evident when he was composing "Vietnam." It was obvious that he first created the sentences in Russian and then translated them into English, a strategy probably used by all second language learners at some time in their second language acquisition (Friedlander, 1990).

Much as he said he enjoyed studying English grammar when he first took the Writing Questionnaire, he was able to admit some six months later when I added more questions about his English instruction to the Writing Questionnaire that the emphasis on correct grammar and mechanics had made writing almost always difficult for him.

Although there were sentence-combining activities at Truman (Chapter IV), Sasha also revealed that he was never allowed to free-write on his own topics at Truman College and seldom (3) at National. Scales and criteria for good writing were never used at Truman and seldom at National. This is a troubling omission for second-language college writing instruction.

Sasha described the cause of his problems in English writing as a result of his inability to stick to the thesis and being "too wordy" because of his Russian language background. He suggested to others of his age on the Writing Questionnaire not to write about big, serious concepts. He believed it was essential to get used to the way Americans organize their ideas and their support in writing, to work on that schema, and the way to introduce your material to the reader (Appendix B).

It would appear that without formal instruction, Sasha has employed contrastive rhetoric to find the similarities and differences between his native Russian and the English language. He was attempting to change his writing style in both languages to fit a new pattern. "In my writing, even in Russian, I would be more logical, much shorter, much straight [sic] and try to use the beauty of the vocabulary. This is what is the art." (See also Appendix B).

This is another example of positive transfer, not only from the first to the second language, but in this case from the second language back to the native language. Knowing Sasha as I now do, it is not surprising that he would take the strategy of transfer one step further and in reverse.

Chapter 7

DISCUSSION

The role of an interpretive case study such as this is to provide an insight into the attitudes, metacognitive strategies, and writing processes of a college level student learning a second language. I chose a student who appeared to be especially articulate and motivated, so as to better understand second language acquisition, especially in the area of written expression.

Comparison of Case Study Subject with Peers

To provide a comparison of attitudes and strategies among his college peers with that of my case study subject, I administered questionnaires in both the reading and writing areas to the case study subject and to second language students who had completed the same academic program. This was done to determine if Sasha was fairly typical for that kind of student population.

From the questionnaires and subsequent interviews, it was determined that Sasha is similar as well as dissimilar to other second language learners in several ways. When it came to his attitudes, it could be seen that he had a higher expectation for his second language acquisition than many of his peers. He tended to place his abilities lower than did his peers, but when he felt he had mastered an area of English function, he was very sure that he possessed it. Thus, his answers tended to be either higher or lower than those of his peers.

One factor that must be considered is that Sasha answered most of the questions while he was in Level IV, while the students in Communication Development had completed Level V. Therefore, they were further along in their second language development than Sasha.

Self-assessment

On the other hand, Sasha prides himself on his honesty. Perhaps he was more accurate in his self-assessment than some of his classmates who may have been more prone to answer in a way that seemed to please the instructor. They may also have judged their language proficiency to be higher than their actual level.

Actual performance of case study subject

These estimations of his own English skills were usually matched with his performance. Very few errors were noted in areas often giving the most difficulty to second language learners, such as with articles (Richards, 1971). Although at one stage in his English development Sasha had indicated problems with plurals, this was seldom found when his errors were categorized. He was thus correct in his own self-assessment when he said once he owned a part of the language, it was his forever.

English as art

Sasha was different from his peers, according to his own estimation, in that he considered learning English to be an art rather than a burden. In his questionnaire and interviews, he revealed his love for grammar and all the rules of the language. In fact, he believed that he was "sick" because of his tendency to wallow in the rules and grammar of English.

Carl Rogers' studied the 'whole person' as a physical, cognitive and emotional being (1951). His form of humanistic psychology focussed on the development of an individual's self-concept and his or her personal sense of reality. According to Rogers, inherent in principles of behavior is the ability of human beings to adapt and to grow in the direction that enhances their existence.

Sasha had expressed the desire to remake himself completely, so that learning the English language meant that he was actually reconstructing himself into a new man; this creation was to be a personification of art.

Social distance

"Social Distance" is a theory along with anomie and acculturation that has been one of the areas of sociolinguistic research. In his responses to the Questionnaires, Sasha recommended that students associate as much as possible with native speakers of English. In this he seemed to be espousing one of the tenets of learning a second language, to decrease social distance with members of the target language.

Actual social distance is difficult to measure. However, it is the perception of social distance which will prevent acculturation into a second culture and language (Day, 1982). In Sasha's case, the English language in America is dominant, although his native language is also highly regarded. Length of his residence, according to the questionnaire, will be permanent (or "forever" in Sasha's own words). Today Sasha interacts primarily with Americans at school and in the workplace.

While Sasha sings at an occasional temple function and has recently been offered a position in a Jewish choir, his lack of religious participation in Ukraine other than as a choir director in Russian Orthodox churches has translated here into non-participation in religious organizations. While this may change over time, it appears that the cohesiveness and size of his Jewish ethnic group to date has been minimal. Social distance from members of the target language in Sasha's case is small and may help to account for his growing fluency in the English language.

Personality of Case Study Subject

Writer's block

Sasha knew he was an intelligent student and that the use of English grammar was a reflection of one's intelligence. When asked if the emphasis on correctness of grammatical form had contributed to his writer's block for several quarters in the Language Institute, he admitted that the more (grammar) he had learned, the more difficult it became to write. In fact, Sasha's perception at that time was that he would be unable to fully demonstrate all that he actually knew through his English writing.

It may also have been the case that Sasha was bored by the topics assigned. For instance, in Level V he could have negotiated two different topics after completing his first assignment, "Most influential person in my life." However, he had already written his monumental memorial, "The person whom I remember," to his beloved grandfather in Level IV. Perhaps he was unable to summon up enough interest to complete this similar topic, and was therefore prevented from completing the additional writing assignments required for Level V.

In his retrospective interviews, Sasha complained that nothing new was introduced in Levels IV and V of the

Language Institute. As a creative type of individual, he was probably excited and euphoric when he was just beginning to learn English in Levels I through III. Unfortunately, in his very first composition in English, "My classmate," his instructor tried to discourage him from being so experimental. He had wanted 'to bring the reader along with him as he walked along Michigan Avenue to his classroom. She, on the other hand, wanted him to demonstrate correct English word order and sentence structure. This was an example of a clash between student and teacher expectations.

By Levels IV and V, Sasha had also become resentful of wasted time in repeating material he had already mastered. In addition, his boredom with the assigned topics may have translated into an inability and/or reluctance to write compositions on demand.

Perfectionism

Although my original hypothesis was that the emphasis on correctness of grammar when writing in English both at the Language Institute and Truman College had caused undue anxiety and a writer's block on the part of Sasha, another possible answer must be considered in light of his personality and cognitive style (Brown, 1987).

Sasha invariably puts himself completely into any task he undertakes. Observing his behavior during writing compositions, such as "Recommendation," this striving for perfectionism was amply verified. Therefore, Sasha can be classified as 'field independent' in cognitive style in that he sets goals for himself and not to please others (Brown, 1987).

When asked if his search for perfection in all things had anything to do with his Russian-Jewish background, Sasha attributed it primarily to his personality and to his musical background. He had found perfection in music and this had translated into a search for perfection in everything he attempted to do. However, he admitted that this attitude often worked to his disadvantage.

Due to Sasha's perfectionism, he often stated that he was "not ready" to demonstrate what he actually knew or fully express in writing what he wished to say in the way he wanted to. While he complained that his Language Institute instructors tended to chide him for asking questions for which he and his classmates were not ready and that would be addressed later at a higher level, he too often insisted that he was not ready when it came to his writing or his music.

Stages of second language writing development

My hypothesis is that Sasha had not yet reached that stage of writing development that he had aspired to and felt he needed in order to complete his Level V writing assignments to his own satisfaction. Because of his personality, the material which had been "transmitted" to Sasha and his classmates by their instructors required additional time for someone of Sasha's temperament to synthesize and adequately apply it. He stated that "he had not been ready to compose." This would tend to suggest stages of a developmental process in second language writing which an individual must pass through at his/her own rate.

Someone like Sasha would not be satisfied with merely a superficial contact with the English language as his parents had experienced, but would require complete mastery before advancing to the next level of proficiency. In fact, it was for this reason he was willing to pay out of his own pocket to attend the Language Institute.

Just as younger students are unable developmentally to produce sentences of increasing syntactic maturity in their first language due to limitations of memory (Mellon, 1969), older students learning a second language like Sasha may be unable to write until they believe they have achieved a sufficient level of proficiency.

Unlike younger children who are eager to write in a second language with invented spelling and any other means available to them even if they do not have complete control over their native languages (Urzua, 1986), older students have more anxieties and inhibitions against appearing ignorant. It is for this reason that the 'affective filter' is higher in adults than in children and impacts their second language acquisition (Krashen, 1976).

Krashen's affective filter

However, Krashen (1976) also postulated that someone like Sasha who has high self-confidence and motivation would be less likely to be influenced by this affective filter. For this reason, the presence of the affective filter should not have applied in Sasha's case. The following scenario may be a more realistic assessment of Sasha's writer's block.

Reflective learner

At the very beginning of our association, Sasha had said that he was 'always thinking, thinking.' After reading an article, Sasha preferred rather than writing about it, "just thinking about it inside of me." (See Writing Questionnaire in Appendix A).

Nevertheless, it has taken me nearly two years to finally classify Sasha as a 'reflective' as opposed to an 'impulsive' learner (Brown, 1987). Sasha had predicted it would take him twenty years to prepare himself to become a world-class conductor. In other words, he tends to methodically pursue his goals, and may stay longer at a particular stage than would an impulsive learner.

This type of learner may be a slower, but more accurate reader. However, a reflective learner like Sasha may make large leaps between stages once he has mastered one of them. We may take Sasha's reading strategies as an example.

Sasha admitted that he had been told that predicting and guessing as one reads text is a strategy good readers use. However, he himself seemed reluctant to guess the meaning of words from context in the event that he had guessed incorrectly. He advised his friends against guessing and recommended looking up all unknown words in several dictionaries. This was a practice that he not only preached, but practiced.

Teachers must allow for more time and be very patient with this type of learner (Brown, 1987). Unfortunately, in Sasha's case, some of his instructors became impatient and checked the time whenever he raised a question. This annoyed Sasha and probably caused him to comment that teachers should not enter the field unless they are completely committed to helping their students. He also voiced appreciation for those American teachers who were willing to go beyond the set curriculum after class to more fully explain words and problems with English that he had encountered.

Integrative goals of case study subject

Not only did Sasha expect to master the English language, but in the process he hoped to learn the American culture as well. He understood that learning the language was only one aspect of learning a culture. He knew that learning the language would help him better understand the people who had created this language.

Surely then Sasha was not simply an instrumental learner who learned English simply to help him in his career (Brown, 1987). His goal was obviously integrative, to assimilate into the culture of America despite the fact that he had chosen this country for the opportunities he hoped it would offer him in fulfilling his career aspirations.

Pronunciation

Sasha's ability to pronounce the English language accurately with proper intonation is one of the more interesting phenomena in this case study. Based only on his ability to pronounce English correctly during his oral interviews in the Language Institute, each of the instructors conducting the interview appeared to have viewed Sasha's oral language proficiency higher than his actual level in the Language Institute. Nevertheless, Sasha was painfully aware of his own capacities and was not swayed into skipping a level or going faster due to monetary cosiderations.

Musician

Sasha acknowledged that as a musician, his 'fine ear' had helped him hear and replicate the correct sounds of English more accurately than other second language learners of his same age.

The critical period for correct pronunciation in a second language has been determined to be puberty (Lenneberg, 1967). This has been attributed to the effects of lateralization of the brain (Krashen, 1973). However, Sasha's musical training appears to have overridden the effects of lateralization.

Gardner (1983) has added musical intelligence as one of seven forms of knowing. According to him, musical intelligence accounts for the ease of some learners to perceive and produce the intonation patterns of a language. Most likely this is one of the reasons for Sasha's excellent pronunciation and the reason his English pronunciation is not typical of most adult second language learner.

Although Sasha had insisted during his third oral interview (Appendix A) that being a musician had not helped him learn English faster, it did prepare him to listen more attentively and actively. His strategy (which also helped me to explain the sounds of English to other second language learners) is to break down English words into its parts, a symbol for each sound so that length or duration of the sound is also indicated, much as is done with musical notation.

English is a metered language. In Russian, two vowel sounds standing next to each other may be represented with two letters, whereas in English it usually is not. Moreover, in Russian the sound-symbol association is more regular than it is in English. Here positive transfer from Sasha's first language was being utilized to analyze and learn English, his second language.

Not surprisingly, another reason Sasha gave for his love of the English language was its musicality. I had understood that English has its tempos and meter, but I did not realize that the tones produced during pronunciation would be considered musical. Sasha felt that knowing how to write and develop things like a melody with other melodies is the work of a composer and for this reason is similar to the writing process itself. Like music, "the more you practice it, you will learn it and it will become easier."

The uses to which Sasha put his musical background as he wrote in English was amply demonstrated as he wrote and tested the letter of recommendation for my tenure. He counted out each of the words in every phrase to assure himself of its fluidity or to determine if there were "too many stops." Not only that, but by moving the last phrase ("a gift of the gods") from the middle of the letter to the very end, Sasha likened it to a final chord in a symphony--a masterpiece.

Vocabulary

While pronunciation was relatively easy for Sasha because he was able to discern and duplicate the sounds of English, he found that vocabulary was his greatest problem in learning a second language. He was sometimes able to guess the meaning from the context, but seemed reluctant to do so for fear of not comprehending the material accurately. Therefore, he went to great lengths to study every unknown word he found as he was reading and as he was preparing to write a composition. Using several different dictionaries, Sasha was thus able to thoroughly understand and use new vocabulary words accurately both in his speaking and writing.

Most astonishing was Sasha's ability to teach his music students the correct phrasing, pronunciation and intonation of the words in the English lyrics of the songs they were preparing for concerts. He was thus able to demonstrate his complete facility with English vocabulary while applying his musical expertise despite the fact that he was just learning the language himself.

Theoretical Implications

Transfer between languages

According to Brown (1987), second language learners will use transfer from the native language until more of the second or target language is acquired. It is a theory that postulates the existence of an interlanguage which is utilized while a second language is being acquired.

Assessing errors then is not only useful for determining negative transfer from a second language learner's native language, but it can be used to study the processes second language learners use while acquiring the target language. Many hypotheses are constructed by a second language learner as he/she makes inductive inferences about his/her new language. If the native language has been acquired completely, certain strategies for transfer to the second language can be utilized successfully until the target language is fully acquired.

Not realizing that this is a strategy used by other second language learners, Sasha indicated that he had been lazy at first, thinking only in Russian and simply translating from Russian into English. Sasha corectly predicted that he would begin to think in English only when an adequate level of English proficiency had been reached. Thus, transfer from the first language is a strategy that is used by most second language learners, such as Sasha.

Contrastive Rhetoric

Sasha added that his writing and that of other second language learners would no longer be wordy and dense, but would be organized into the straightforward style of other writers of English once a sufficient level of English proficiency had been attained. However, Sasha also commented that this rhetorical style would be considered insulting in other countries, a point that should be understood by teachers of second languages.

Contrastive Analysis

Sasha was forced by his tradition of learning rules and being perfect to combine "high" words and bring it into his English language. So he tried to speak in perfect Russian, but in English. He learned to his regret, however, that it was not English he was speaking, but Russian being "squeezed" between English rules, grammar and patterns.

In composing "Brownsville" during his first semester at Truman, Sasha was 'swimming' in these grammar patterns while his "perfectionism was in full bloom." By the end of the quarter, however, he found that the simpler he wrote, the better it came out.

Sasha likened this style of writing to the culture itself. "This is the culture; this is the way it goes in America. I have to get through this period of writing simple things."

He then articulated a regimen of writing tasks he would follow that would help prepare him to write in a more direct and succinct style typical of academic English writing. Sasha predicted this would take many years.

It is now apparent that there is positive as well as negative transfer from a student's native language. For instance, Sasha looked at his first language, Russian, from a new perspective after having studied English grammar. Sasha reports that he now reads Russian text more carefully and is very attentive towards his writing in Russian as well. He also has a renewed interest in studying his own culture more completely as described in the classic Russian novels he had read, but had not previously understood.

During his Error Analysis of correspondence I had received from another Russian writer of English, Sasha was able to explain why the mistakes of transfer (in this case, negative) had been made by the writer. He was able to compare Russian word order and expressions when they were translated directly into English from Russian. In fact, he had difficulty even pronouncing those expressions that were grammatically incorrect in English.

Not only was Sasha able to describe the Russian word order and expressions peculiar to his native tongue, but in this way he was also able to compare it to the American English style of writing--performing a kind of contrastive rhetoric in the process. He later reported that he himself was translating English expressions directly into Russian, often to the consternation of his Russian listeners, a case of negative transfer.

Acculturation

According to Sasha's written compositions and the interviews with him, he appeared to have proceeded through some of the stages of acculturation as he was acquiring his second language. Schumann (1978) divided the process of acculturation itself into four stages: 1) euphoria, 2) culture shock, 3) culture stress and 4) assimilation or adaptation to the second culture. For example, he may have been experiencing euphoria as he was writing his very first composition, "Classmate," during the Spring of 1993. He tried to be experimental until he was discouraged by his instructor.

However, by the following summer when he was in Level II, homesickness and culture shock were evident in "Hometown," one of only six favorite topics of Sasha's in two years. "I was feeling nostalgic; it was written during the summer--a golden time of life. I felt the loss of a dream and the coming of reality." Conversely, the second stage of culture shock is postulated as the period when second language acquisition is optimal (Brown, 1987).

"Anomie" was used by Lambert (1967) to describe the feeling of homelessness that the student has when he feels neither bound to his home language or the new one. As a matter of fact, the feeling of anomie is strongest when the individual linguistically begins to master the second language. According to Brown (1987), this feeling coincides with the beginning of the third stage of acculturation, culture shock.

Sasha's feelings of anomie continued into the Fall quarter (Level III) during which time he lamented his lost Russian culture in "Helen." Culture shock usually occurs about six months after entering a new culture when the second language learner begins to compare the values and patterns of the new country with those of his native country (Schumann, 1978). The learner, realizing that he will not be returning to his native country, feels the sense of loss to a greater degree than if he was only away from his native country temporarily.

Sasha's feelings of homelessness are vividly described in his compositions. In "I am not a typical student" written in Level III, he demonstrated his feelings of anomie, asserting that he was not a typical American student, but also fearing the time he would become typical.

He also demonstrates alienation from his own family in "My most important decision" written for Level IV when career goals are being discussed and when dreams clash with reality--a typical dilemma of many immigrants. Trying to assert his independence, he is accused of being "irresponsible."

Most alarming to me have been the reports of Clarke (1976) and Bateson (1972) which describe the schizophrenic nature of second language and second culture learning.

"The intensity of the amount of effort and energy expended by the individual learning the language and culture to keep communication from breaking down over the simplest item is enormous. It is this intense nature or period of culture shock that becomes the critical time for the learner to overcome in order to go on" (Day, 1981).

I became aware of the fact that in his personal life, Sasha experienced many crises and culture stress during this stage of acculturation. In "Recommendation" and in "Writing Questionnaire" (Appendix A), he alludes to the many problems he was having in adjusting to his new environment. After all, he was now the person in his family upon whom the rest depended. At one point, he had cried for hours over the loss of moral support his grandfather had provided him.

Sasha has probably been passing through interlanguage, the stage between two languages and two cultures that purportedly is the ideal situation for learning. During this time, there is sufficient pressure to learn the second language completely before pidginization and/or fossilization can take place.

The final stage of acculturation is typified by almost full recovery, so that the individual is now able to work and live in the new situation, enjoy it, and have confidence in his own ability to do so (Day, 1981). According to one of his faculty mentors, Sasha is becoming more human and more confident in his ability to succeed in his new culture.

Thus, he may be slowly reaching the final stage of acculturation, that of complete assimilation. In fact, he answered on his questionnaire that he intended to stay in the U.S. forever. Intended length of stay is crucial to second language acquisition, according to Schumann(1978).

Since Sasha loves the English language and appears to prefer the American system of education to his own, we may infer that he is becoming acculturated into the American way of life.

Evaluation of Instruction

Teacher Feedback

Based on retrospective interviews about his compositions, teacher feedback was very important in the way they affected Sasha's efforts to compose in his second language. Error correction must be optimal so that the second language learner does not become discouraged, nor fossilized into incorrect grammatical patterns when corrections are not made for global errors that impede comprehension (Brown, 1987).

Negative transfer or overgeneralization from Sasha's native language occurred primarily in punctuation and word order in his earliest writings. In analyzing his own compositions at a later stage in his language development, Sasha was able to pinpoint the errors he had made, primarily due to negative transfer.

The kinds of error correction the second language learner has received also influences writing development and production. The danger in assessing written productions written by second language learners according to pre-established English rhetorical patterns, was pointed out by Land and Whitley (1989). From their perspective, the English language itself will suffer if second language writers are forced to conform to English rhetorical form. Since living languages are by their very nature constantly changing, the richness of the English language itself will only be enhanced by adding and appreciating different rhetorical styles.

Involvement and creativity

During Level VII, Sasha was able to produce two essays in class with much less effort than was expended as he was composing "Recommendation," "Vietnam" and "Brownsville." According to the errors found in Sasha's compositions, writing development in a second language appears to vary according to the topic assigned and the amount of ownership the writer gives to it.

When Sasha was actively involved in the topic and material, he was less likely to make errors in writing. This became apparent when analyzing compositions such as "Important Person" and "Recommendation," both topics that Sasha considered to be "works of art."

Reid (1990) wanted to know the impact of topic task on writers' responses in the assessment process. Using a computer text-analysis program, she found that different topic tasks adminstered to writers with different language and cultural backgrounds elicited responses that are linguistically measurable and measurably different. Essay length often indicated development within paragraphs, structural completeness and fluency (Reid, 1990).

Second Language Writing Development

Syntactic Maturity

An interesting comparison can be found in Sasha's syntactic maturity in written expression. During Level I, his syntactic maturity was comparable to that of a seventh grader. After ten weeks of language instruction, Sasha was able to write at a level comparable to a twelfth grader.

According to O'Hare's (1971) normative data for first language learners, Sasha's average words per T-unit (9.1) and average clauses per T-unit (1.35) placed Sasha at about the seventh grade during Level I. During Level II, his syntactic maturity had increased to about the twelfth grade level with 15.45 average words per T-unit and 1.66 average clauses per T-unit.

Thus, Sasha's syntactic maturity rose steadily, not at a glacial pace (Hunt, 1964), to 16.31 words per T-unit and

1.75 clauses per T-unit in Level III and 19.76 words per T-unit and 2.02 clauses per T-unit in Level IV. These are comparable to grade 12+, according to O'Hare (1971). These excellent results may have had something to do with Sasha's cognitive development as an adult. Whether this is normal development for a second language college student is a question that needs further study. Any relation this may have had to sentence-combining exercises Sasha reported having had in the Language Institute is another area for investigation.

Writing on demand

It was a year after finishing Level V before Sasha could produce writing in the classroom and under pressure, as his instructor at Truman College had predicted he would. Since his instructor in Level VI was an English teacher rather than a second language teacher of English, she had emphasized writing freely and without regard to form and correctness. Eventually, Sasha was able to do so which led her to ask him, "Why haven't you done this before?" It would appear that Sasha's writing block was as intriguing to others as it was to me.

By being able to write on demand, Sasha gained new confidence into his abilities to write under pressure on a given topic and to do so in a linear, Western rhetorical style of writing. He expressed great satisfaction once he realized that he could meet these classroom and teacher goals. However, he ruefully remarked that "when you write stupid and simple things, they like it. When you try to be sophisticated, they don't bother to try to understand it--it's cultural."

Comparison With Oral Expression

However, when it came to the number of errors per 100 words, a dramatic decrease was measured on Sasha's oral expression when compared to Sasha's written expression produced during the same level of English instruction. My hypothesis is that as an adult learner, Sasha was better able to monitor the rules of grammar he has learned during his oral expression than could a younger second language student (Krashen, 1981).

The Role of the Monitor

According to Mellon (1978), children are unable developmentally to retain in memory all the grammatical rules when they are writing to be able to increase their syntactic maturity. It is my hypothesis that Sasha's monitor was also operating more efficiently as an adult learner and musician when he was speaking than could a younger student.

What does not correspond to Krashen's theory of monitor use is that time is needed to apply the rules that have been learned. Therefore, the Monitor, according to Krashen, is used more often during the writing process when more time is available than during speaking. In Sasha's case, he may have been overly anxious during his writing process and the Monitor was used to an excessive degree. The Monitor, in this case, may have been predominantly responsible for his writer's block.

On the other hand, Sasha may have been more effective in using his Monitor during oral communication. It did not impede his communication, although he appeared to be unusually subdued during his first two oral interviews. By the third interview, Sasha had become more confident and actually worried aloud that he was talking too much.

It may also be that oral expression is Sasha's particular area of strength. Sasha is better able to monitor his errors in speech more efficiently than when he writes. He is able to use the context of the situation, the responses of his audience, and his own fine 'ear' when he speaks, revising, testing, and picking alternative words and phrases as he goes along.

As I also mentioned to Sasha, there is an optimum level of monitoring (Krashen, 1973). Too much will impede comprehension on the part of a listener. Even when he wrote, Sasha would offer alternative answers, a practice which his Level IV instructor tried to discourage. Whether the Monitor works more effectively during adult speech to detect errors is an area for further research.

To label speech as unplanned discourse and writing as planned (Ellis,1985) does not seem helpful in analyzing these two types of language production. Both modes of expression show development in syntactic maturity and decrease in number of errors over time (Labov, 1963). The close relationship between oral expression, reading and writing was also demonstrated in Labov's study, as in mine.

Use of language functions

Sasha was characterized by his Level V instructor as a person who fully uses his language to communicate. I would suggest that Sasha has used each of the functions Halliday (1973) listed. During his tutoring sessions (see also "Testimonial" and "Recommendation"), Sasha was willing to use the representational function of his second language to inform, convey facts and knowledge, and to explain within the context of his expertise in music.

Sasha was also excellent in using the interactional function of language to ensure social maintenance. The personal function allowed Sasha to describe his feelings, emotions, and personality in both his written and oral productions. He was also adept at using the heuristic function of language to acquire knowledge, often to the chagrin of some of his instructors.

Sasha seemed to value the imaginative function of language to be poetic and creative in "The Person Whom I Remember" and "Vietnam" and to soar into the heights of the beauty of language itself. He loved not only to hear beautiful language, but to play with it and explore it to its greatest depths. A faculty member commented that Sasha seemed to understand the requirements of a writing assignment better than the instructor herself did, a rather remarkable statement.

Although we have seen that Sasha was not always happy with the topics assigned to him, the compositions he was able to produce, such as the ones just described, were often judged to be excellent according to several measures of writing development.

Flahive and Snow (1980) found that holistic evaluations such as the Highland Park Pupil Writing Evaluation used by my outside readers should correlate with clause/T-unit ratio. Nevertheless, how much more might have been produced and with less reluctance if Sasha and his classmates had been given the freedom to choose topics and writing assignments that were meaningful to them within the context of their own lives can only be conjectured.

Writing in the Context of Reading

Sasha found that reading in English gave him the patterns of English usage so necessary for him to write. According to Sasha, the study of English grammar also helped him with his reading comprehension in that he could predict content from the structure of grammar.

While he had insisted at one time in his writing development that he had nothing to write about and preferred just thinking about what he had read, when writing topics were assigned he was eventually able to produce writing in the classroom under time constraints. Because of his personality, making such demands and assuring this type of student he can achieve these goals may be necessary at some points in their writing development, especially when writer's block is evident.

However, instructors must be cognizant that there are many factors involved when a student is unable or unwilling to write in his second language and other strategies may be necessary. A sensitivity to the stages of acculturation the student may be passing through may be necessary and utilized to the student's advantage.

The results of the questionnaires, interviews and analysis of his compositions appear to substantiate Schumann's theory that a second language learner proceeds through stages of acculturation while acquiring his second language. Whether these stages are necessary for second language acquisition to proceed has not been verified, however.

Comparison of Educational Systems

From his academic experiences in both settings, Sasha was able to contrast the educational systems in America and Russia and to apply it even further to the writing process itself. According to Sasha, the crucial difference in the two systems is the way students are encouraged to think in the United States and discouraged in Russia from questioning 'authority' as embodied in the instructors (see Appendix B).

"America has given me the right and freedom to associate and contact teachers. There are no barriers, no required respect. Here you have a real chance to respect teachers. This association is part of the learning process. Here you have the freedom to ask questions and to admit your lack of knowledge."

According to Sasha, the Russian people were afraid of their own opinions or even the right to have them. Nor were they taught to think and defend their opinions. In contrast, once a thesis is proposed by a writer in this country, details and supporting ideas must then be furnished to support the thesis. Writing, therefore, is an act of thinking, a conclusion not unlike that of his countryman, Vygotsky (1962).

Now even when he writes in Russian, Sasha says what is on his mind, regardless of any errors he may be making. He realizes he cannot know everything and is no longer ashamed to admit it (Appendix B).

Ideal Subject

Was this subject then a good choice for illuminating some of the processes involved in second language acquisition? Sasha was at all times a willing and eager participant in this study. He found the goal of studying his own second language acquisition as fascinating as I did. The only problem is that he would have done it in much greater detail, phrase by phrase--a testament to his perfectionism.

According to Ellis, learners who are highly motivated are more likely to seek out instruction than learners who are not so highly motivated. In Sasha's retrospective interviews and in the interviews conducted with two of his Language Institute instructors, it was clear that Sasha was a serious and highly motivated second language learner who always sought out extra information not covered in the curriculum for his particular Language Institute level, only to be told to wait until he had reached the proper level.

Sasha demonstrated many of the characteristics of a successful second language learner in that he paid attention to form and monitored his speech and writing carefully. He used his new grammar rules and believed that language learning required attention to both function and form. He also possessed a combination of maturity and intelligence.

Unlike a small child who is just becoming literate in a second language, Sasha was highly literate in his first language. He understood the functions of writing and attempted to use them as he spoke and wrote in his second language. He enjoyed reading in his second language and transferred what he had learned about his second language back to his first language.

What Sasha needs now is more practice in writing in expressive and poetic modes, as well as the academic expository styles he has already encountered. He will learn that not all English writing is simple and direct, a conclusion he seems to have reached too prematurely. However, Urzua (1986), observed that her young second language learners also developed a sense of Western Culture's emphasis on directness and cause and effect after only a couple of years in a school in the United States.

Unlike Sasha, the ideal second language learner will not be afraid of assuming a child-role in language learning. He/she will not be inhibited in his/her attempts to utilize the language and will not be concerned with making perfect responses. The second language learner will allow him/herself the opportunity of making mistakes and realize that progress will come in spurts.

Despite his initial impulse to produce only perfect final written products, Sasha was eventually able to lower his high expectations for himself and meet his instructors' requirements for in-class writing. This will help him with academic English assignments, especially the frequent essay exams with assigned topics typical of the college curriculum.

Implications

Grammar

There are several implications that can be made which emanate from this study. According to the results of the questionnaires and interviews with Sasha, the grammar instruction in the Language Institute was very thorough and well-paced, especially when compared to the instruction received by his parents at a city college. However, research into writing has demonstrated that learning grammar rules does not translate into correct writing. In fact, error-oriented pedagogy may interfere with the writing process itself (Milligan, 1939 & Harris, 1962).

Rather than focussing on errors and structure of ESL writing, Hu (1995) suggests grading on the basis of the richness of contents rather than the extent to which students' journals were free from grammatical errors. "As the effect of the avoidance strategy factor was reduced to its minimum, errors did manifest some aspects of students' linguistic competence and reflect certain strengths and weaknesses of their writing abilities in this case" (p. 14).

Curriculum

Repeating much of the material in Levels IV and V as Sasha reported was wasteful in time, money and effort for serious students such as himself. Time could be better spent in reinforcing the communicative aspects of language throughout the curriculum (Appendix B).

Assessment

Better language assessment for more accurate placement in the Language Institute would also help alleviate this problem of repetition in Levels IV and V. Keeping in mind what Cummins (1979) has pointed out, oral language proficiency may not completely indicate the level of language competency necessary for academic performance, since most academic work is more context-reduced than is conversational skill. Adding a reading and writing component as Kameen recommended (1983) should help alleviate this problem.

Pronunciation

It would appear that the area of pronunciation needs strengthening in the Language Institute. Due to time constraints or the belief that the students are past the peak for learning correct pronunciation, the Language laboratories concentrate on grammar rather than pronunciation. What pronunciation is given is not only uninteresting, but is decontextualized and meaningless. Whether Sasha's ability to learn correct pronunciation outside, but not inside the classroom, is atypical of college-age students is another area for future investigation.

It would appear that since Sasha found the material in Level V essentially a review of all the prior levels, some time could be given to listening/speaking (pronunciation) skills and in more realistic and communicative settings. Since Conversation class is offered as a no-credit option after Level V at NLU, the types of activities used in that class could be incorporated into Level V classes. Less emphasis on grammar and more of a whole language approach using literature, music and the arts would give the Language Institute curriculum a more balanced and less rigid program. Level V would appear to be the ideal locus for such an innovative change in the Language Institute that would synthesize all the material into a more cohesive whole.

Writer's block

According to Sasha, the emphasis on correct grammar during the first three levels of the Language Institute was not misplaced. However, the inundation by so many rules of grammar could easily have caused a writer's block in Sasha's case. Forcing students to use the grammatical constructions learned in class in their compositions at

National and Truman added to the difficulty of the writing assignments, especially if the students had not been taught the grammar constructions they were to use. Lack of fluency and command of function would also have contributed to Sasha's reluctance to write during Level V. Writing, therefore, should be separated from grammar instruction itself.

Second language writing instruction

Allowing for more creative types of writing in a whole language approach and utilizing other forms of instruction such as music, drama, role-playing and art would be beneficial for second language instruction. It would also tend to lower the anxiety level and affective filter of the students, while utilizing the right brain as well as the left brain during the acquisition process (Krashen, 1973).

Beginning the writing process with in-class reading and discussion would stimulate students and provide background knowledge as a pre-writing activity. Moffett (1983) suggests that "the most important way to learn linguistic forms is by internalizing the whole give and take of conversations. The learner synthesizes what both A and B said...and produces in the future a new sentence that is a conjoining, embedding, or other synthesis of the two utterances. Whatever the form of synthesis, he produces a more elaborate statement than was either before...Although extensive reading and listening prepare for elaboration, they do not seem to activate it" (Moffett,p. 78).

According to Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel and Jacobs (1983), both controlled and free writing instruction are essential for ESL writers' communicative competence. While controlled writing as practiced in the Language Institute shows beginning ESL writers what the expected forms and structures are, free writing at the middle or upper levels provides them an early opportunity to find their own voices and to become independent writers.

Hughey et al. (1983) believe that all writing must be taught in recursive cycles and as creative rather than in the more traditional linear stages of prewriting, writing, and revising. A combination of daily writing exercises as well as emphasizing quality production in class assignments is necessary to help writers develop an understanding of the critical role of shaping in the writing process and a sense of responsibility to an audience.

While many ESL writers are less likely to need or use literary forms of writing as a lifetime skill, this genre can help them discover themselves and what they have to say. These discoveries will help writers in the more frequently used functional forms that the real world may require (Hughey et al., 1983).

Since more abstract ideas and complex concepts can be presented in written form, writing and oral skills should be learned simultaneoulsy. As all language modes are highly interrelated and draw on many of the same creative processes, it is not advisable to teach one skill in isolation from the others.

Writing topics

More attention needs to be given for the assignment of writing topics. Based on Sasha's experiences, allowances should also be given for the type and length of compositions and the efforts put forth by the students. Requiring a set number of compositions per quarter is inflexible and may actually defeat the purpose of the writing assignments. Asking students to write on topics that are of no interest to them without adequate preparation would also tend to stifle the writing process.

Language functions

According to Hughey et al. (1983), the ultimate writing purposes of most ESL writers will be to share experience and demonstrate knowledge. Their major purposes are what is traditionally called exposition and argument, or in modern terms, referential and persuasive forms of discourse. ESL writing will therefore generally fall into the category of public writing, mostly for academically oriented audiences.

Forms of discourse are essentially writers' purposes, both personal and public. A reader thus constitutes a purpose or focus. Writers select whatever tools, instruments and tactics that seem most functional to that purpose, given the writer's sense of style and subject matter, and the audience. When writers have identified what they want to accomplish, they decide what technique will best help them accomplish their goals.

Literary discourse such as poetry, novels, and ballads carry cultural meaning within their forms, but writing it is rarely an ESL writer's purpose, according to Hughey et al., 1983. However, Sasha, for one, attempted to write in this vein when composing his memorium to his grandfather. Nevertheless, reading literary discourse is helpful to ESL writers as a means of becoming familiar with the genre, the conventions of the language, rhetorical patterns, and reader expectations.

Besides learning grammar, students need practice in fulfilling the three functions of writing: to express their individual needs, problems, and feelings, to be poetic by using the language for its own use, and to use the language transactionally to convey information (Britton et al., 1975).

Hughey et al., 1983, describe expressive discourse as an end in itself. It is a means of discovering self, so it is especially helpful to ESL writers. Characterized by less formal structure and form, expressive writing tends toward more abstract and poetic forms. It overlaps literary discourse, since much of literature is also based on writer's feelings, experiences and beliefs.

Referential discourse is when the subject itself is the primary focus and the ESL student reproduces reality and conveys truths. Because much of the writing ESL students do focuses on the real world and because much of the writing originates from real-life situations requiring problem-solving techniques, ESL students especailly need a general heuristic for problem solving (Hughey et al., 1983).

Persuasive discourse is to induce some practical choice or prompt an action from its audience. Writers must pay careful attention to the arrangment of material because without order the force of the best material will be weakened. Sasha intuitively sensed the uses of this form of discourse as he wrote the letter of recommendation for me.

Writing conferences

The use of writing conferences with peers and teachers could be used to greater advantage to individualize the topics and to assist with the editing process. Hughey et al., 1983, emphasize that students reflect in their written work a good teacher's sense for exploration, experimentation, discovery and opportunites for effective expression. The effect of a teacher enhances rather than suppresses these positive signs of growth. The teacher's presence will be felt, but the dominant force in the writing class should be the writer.

Paradigm

The audio-lingual method primarily being used at the Language Institute is based on the behavioristic paradigm that repeated drills and practice leads to greater automaticity in second language learning. However, since the function of language is purposeful, the idea of communicative competence has come into greater favor among instructors of second languages.

It appears that instructors may need to be given the right to deviate from the curriculum according to the needs and interests of individual students within the ESL classroom. Using an eclectic approach whenever possible probably will not diminish the quality of the program, but may actually enhance it (Spolsky, 1983).

Second language students

Not all second language students have as their goals to prepare themselves for technical or business careers. While this is more typical of many young immigrants, of whom more and more are coming to our shores, others may be drawn to the arts and the humanities. Their paths may be more difficult, since they will need more English skills than those who decide upon careers stressing mathematical rather than language skills.

Sasha was especially adept at discerning shades of meaning. His phonetic awareness and 'ear' for the English language was exceptional due to his musical background.

I chose Sasha because of his positive attitude toward acquiring a second language and his ability to analyze and articulate the perceptions, problems, and processes he was going through. There will probably be other students like Sasha who view second language acquisition as a form of art.

For those students especially, second language instruction must be more creative, based on individual interests and needs, and less drill-oriented. A whole language approach using English literature and other types of authentic texts would help ensure that the instruction will be uplifting as well as functional.

Students need to be prepared in advance to participate in nontraditional language learning activities. Performing experiments and making observations either individually or in groups promotes the acquisition of students' abilities to generalize, predict, and synthesize material. Thus they provide specific experience and information for a writing task and are helpful in developing descriptive powers necessary for comparison-contrast, classification, definition, and process. The focus is on the event or activity rather than the writing task itself and in this way replaces the inhibitions created by a formal classroom atmosphere.

Interviewing of fellow classmates for writing assignments may need to be postponed for the higher levels. Understanding the teacher in a second language is difficult enough without having to understand another beginning second language learner.

It would appear that instructors may need to be more sensitive to their students' backgrounds, cultures, and their creativity. Students such as Sasha are artists in their own right. Their inclinations to be creative and to play with the English language should not be stifled, but rather encouraged, even if they are second language learners. It is the same trend that teachers of native English speakers have been practicing for some time to great advantage.

When language classes fail to meet student expectations, students can lose confidence in the instructional approach, as Sasha did, and their ultimate achievement in second language acquisition can be limited.

Future Research

Second language writing acquisition

A comparison of a subject's second language writing with assigned topics and those of his own choosing and different genres would be interesting. Whether Sasha's second language writing development is typical of other college level students is a question that needs further research. Are his patterns of errors and syntactic maturity evident among his classmates' compositions? Looking further into the data collected from the reading and writing questionnaires might be useful in revealing other variables that could affect second language writing development.

Writer variables such as age, degree of bilingualism, previous writing instruction in each language and the different preferences in writing in one language or another that individuals may express must also be considered (Canale et al.,in press).

Canale et al. believe that examination of various writing products is no substitute for studying various writing processes that bilingual writers may exhibit. Therefore, more process-oriented research needs to be conducted using a variety of case studies of different ages, gender and racial or ethnic backgrounds.

When a student such as Sasha learns a third or fourth language as part of his preparation into the world of conducting, will he utilize the same strategies that he used in acquiring his second language? Will the path of development be as arduous or will there be transfer from both his first and second languages? Such a longitudinal study of a single case study over many years would make for fascinating research.

Other longitudinal case studies using subjects of different ages and gender, native languages, and career aspirations would help educators better understand their needs, perceptions, and methods for teaching second languages. As this nation becomes even more culturally, ethnically and racially diverse, such research will become increasingly valuable and necessary.

According to Burgess (1988), it may only be through story that language, culture and difference can be seen concretely. Sasha's story and his experience at living between two cultures helps place difference at the center of teaching and learning. "A focus on languages, without deeper connections being made, without a shift of recognition towards difference as fundamental, without a shift of awareness into culture and history will again leave conceptions of language and learning shorn of a fully social account" (Burgess, p. 160).

It has been said that history is the forgotten side of Vygotskian thought, since Vygotsky considered language acquisition to be a byproduct of the culture and its history. In this way he not only confronted behaviourism, but also countered the trend toward abstraction of language from history (Burgess, 1988).

Autobiography and fiction will have much to contribute to an integrative stance in classrooms. Difference is a point about cultural experience. To attend to it is to attend to people's experience in time, across cultures, across languages as these are given in history.

Coming as he did from an alien but fascinating culture during an historic upheaval in political systems, Sasha affords us a view into the different and into history. His story as he acquires his second language can help illuminate the process of second language learning and acquisition for one young man and others whose goals include understanding and assimilating into the culture and language and history of the country which has produced it.

Epilogue

It is now the Fall of 1995 and Sasha has been in the United States for nearly two and one-half years. Sasha is enrolled in Fundamentals of Composition at Truman College and reports that he enjoys writing in English, being no longer as immersed in the grammar and mechanics of English writing as he was in the beginning of his second language acquisition. These concerns have now receded into the background as his writing has become more fluid and automatic.

Sasha feels that last year was an especially good one for his second language acquisition. Because he currently has some five different jobs and is pressed for time, he has had to speed up his speech. In spite of this, he feels confident that he is able to communicate in English correctly. Moreover, he has had to organize his time better and sleep fewer hours than he had previously. Having to organize his time has also improved his thinking abilities which, he reminded me, contributes directly to his writing.

I found it amusing that while previously he had been adamant that he had no interest in keeping a diary (see Writing Questionnaire in Chapter VI and Appendix A), he is now eager to do so. He hopes in this way to keep a record of his thoughts for later writing assignments that he may take upon himself, though he does not consider himself to be another Pushkin.

Most importantly, Sasha is now able to devote his attention to the organization of what he wishes to express in writing. He feels he has attained a higher level of writing proficiency and is able to concentrate on the content and meaning of what he wishes to write, rather than the accuracy of his grammar. This is another indication to me that Sasha has proceeded to another stage of second language acquisition. We can only hope that all second language students pass through these stages as well as Sasha has done.

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APPENDIX A

FORMAL INTERVIEWS IN ORAL EXPRESSION, READING AND WRITING

GUIDELINES FOR THE ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW

Language Institute--National-Louis University*

The point of the oral proficiency interview is to elicit "natural speech" from the speaker and to maintain a brief conversation that will allow the interviewer to form a global evaluation of a person's language proficiency. Since the purpose of this assessment is to obtain a GLOBAL measure of language proficiency, the interviewer need not focus on specific aspects of the language, such as mastery of the irregular past tense or subject-verb number agreement, or control of the fricatives. Rather, by carefully following the proficiency descriptions provided in the interview form the interviewer should be able to give a global rating on each of the five aspects of language: Accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

The following steps may be taken:

1. Put the person at ease.

2. Introduce yourself and let the person introduce him/herself.

3. Start by asking questions that require simple answers.

   - What country are you from?

   -How long have you been in the U.S.?

4. Proceed by asking student more open-ended questions:

   -Do you remember your first day in the U.S.? Tell me about it.

   -Do you watch television? Tell me about your favorite program.

   -What's your favorite food? Tell me why you like it.

*Adaptation of the Foreign Service Institute English Language Oral Interview

Oral Interview for New Students

Language Institute

Spring 1993

3/8/93

Interviewer: Julie H.

Student: Sasha

Julie:My name is Julie. What's your name? Can you spell your last name for me?

Sasha: ---------

Julie: Sasha? Nice to meet you...

Sasha: Sasha....

Julie: OK. Where are you from?

Sasha: I am from Ukraine.

Julie: How long have you been in the states?

Sasha: One month

Julie: One month? A short time... Did you study English in Ukraine?

Sasha: No

Julie: No?

Sasha: No, I study English here...

Julie: You were here before?

Sasha: No, (inaudible)

Julie: You've been here since February? One month?

Sasha: And a half--

Julie: For one month? But where did you study in Ukraine?

You learned everything in one week?

Sasha: Yes, I very much studied.

Julie: Oh, studied; O.K. What did you do in Ukraine?

Sasha: I study in second music school; conducting

Julie: Ah, conducting...

Sasha: I studied in Dniepropetrovsk.

Julie: Do you also play an instrument?

Sasha: I play, I play the piano.

Julie: Music is the international language, right? That's good for you. Why did you come to the U.S.? Why?

Sasha: In Russia, we had very much. I can't study. I very very want to study. I would like to be a conductor...

Julie: Have you heard the Chicago Symphony Orchestra?

Sasha: No, I will be to visit on 9/5

Julie: On May 9?

Sasha: I know (Russian name)

Julie: I think it's a good orchestra. I forgot what I was going to ask you. Oh, oh, what do you think of Chicago?

Sasha: I not to see Chicago--look Chicago--in pictures, all Chicago. But

Julie: Where do you live?

Sasha: I live on Devon..

Julie: Indian neighborhood

Sasha: Jewish

Julie: Jewish, Indian,

Sasha: Russian Jews

Julie: Good food, good restaurants there

Sasha: I don't know, but there are good, but Ukrainian is very bad.

Julie: What did you on the first day in the U.S.?

Sasha: First, first...I get up, I go shower, get dressed...

Julie: Did you do anything different? Did you visit relatives? Did you have parties?

Sasha: I visit to.... Then I go.... Four or five.... Then I study English at home and

Julie: I'd like you to take a short test. In this program we have five English classes. What class would be right for you?

Sasha: The first class.

Julie: Let's see, let's see.

Sasha: I would like to study English language.

Julie: Are you working?

Sasha: Only studying. But I will working be. Excuse me. Check. I must write test?

Julie: It's OK, it's very short. It's not important. It will tell me if Level I is good. I must have document. This will make sure you are in the right level.

Addendum: One month later when Sasha came to register, this same instructor suggested he go into Level II based on the improvement she noted in his pronunication. Sasha declined to accept this invitation.

Oral Interview after

Level III

Interviewer: Bob

Student: Sasha

11/9/93

Bob: OK, Sasha... Bob. Nice to meet you.

Have a seat; we just want to ask you questions to see how you speak.

[Laughter from both...]

Bob: Where are you from?

Sasha: Ukraine...

Bob: You must have had one boat for everyone from Ukraine...

Sasha: Yes...

Bob: How long have you been in the U.S.?

Sasha: I've been here for ten months...

Bob: Oh, where did you study English before?

Sasha: No,I didn't...

Bob: You didn't? You started studying English here at Level I?

Sasha: On April 5...

Bob: That's the first time you studied English? Really? I can't believe you didn't study English before...Tell the truth....

Sasha: OK, OK....I can't believe it too.

Bob: You must study very hard.

Sasha: Oh, no...

Bob: Your accent is excellent.

Sasha: Thanks...

Bob: Where do you live in Chicago?

Sasha: North side...

Bob: Ukrainian village?

Sasha: No, De'von Ave.

Bob: Devon' Ave. It's the only place in the world where Devon' is pronounced that way. Devon and...?

Sasha: Devon and Sacramento. Devon in Russian is a sofa.

Bob: Oh, divan.... So, do you live by yourself?

Sasha: With my parents.

Bob: Everyone came at the same time?

Sasha: Yes...

Bob: What does your father do?

Sasha: Now they are studying English...

Bob: Here, are they in class here?

Sasha: Yah, probably; I hope so. They are taking English in two schools. Temple Menorah. Orton school.

Bob: What do you want to do with your life?

Sasha: I'd love to be a musician.

Bob: Oh, what kind?

Sasha: A conductor (loud laughter). I know it's pretty

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hard to be a musician. And I ..... to change.

Bob: Oh, you just need connections. You need

Sasha: To study hard, to study English.

Bob: Do you know Katia? She's a pianist. She was my student in Level V. She's studying music for the Ukrainian Church. There's so many people who want musical careers...

Sasha: Very hard...

Bob: But people do it. Did you study music in Ukraine?

Sasha: Yes, I graduated from Glinka Music School.in my city, Dniepropetrovsk.

Bob: Have you conducted?

Sasha: Yes, I conducted two choirs and I taught Music Theory

Bob: What kind of music do you prefer?

Sasha: I prefer all kinds of good music

Bob: What do you think about American music?

Sasha: I'm afraid I don't know a lot, but I heard that Northwestern University has lots of new works where composers

Bob: It's good to go to the library.

Sasha: I do it. I have three concerts to attend this week

Bob: It's good to know people in music school to get free tickets.

Sasha: I have some people...

Bob: What do you think about National?

Sasha: Now, I have pretty much experience here. I think the

Language Institute and its program is pretty good. I enjoy it. The third level, I really enjoyed it. My first teacher was Judith... And Mr. F. was my teacher for two levels.

Bob: So you sound like him...

Sasha: Of course, (laughter)

Bob: Can you think of anything we can improve at National?

Sasha: Yes, it has to do with students' money...I think it's better to ...we have more time to be with our Language Lab teachers. It's very important to hear and speak.

Bob: We've used up our time. Do you know Pavel? Maybe he came while we were talking.

Sasha: It's very true.

Oral Interview--After Level V

May 31, 1994

Interviewer: Robin

Robin: Are you tired?

Sasha: Oh, I am sleepy....

Robin: Yes? Why is that?

Sasha: Ah... I couldn't get to sleep...

Robin: You're not alone....It was hard, it was so hot last night...

Where do you live?

Sasha: Here, Devon'

Robin: You're Russian, right?

Sasha: Right....my parents... I..I,..I.. (inaudible)

Robin: I remember your parents. I know your parents--

Sasha: So they...

Robin: Anna... Anna and Valentin

Sasha: Right

Robin: Ah, hah....When I saw your name I thought, "I know this name." Oh, OK...how come you didn't go to the other school?

Sasha: Um...no, I ...this is a university...so...I do not regret it...

Robin: Are you going to continue your education after you finish Level V?

Sasha: Hopefully, I'll try to get into a university... any university, we'll see. I don't know yet; I... because I haven't found a teacher... I'm a musician, so...I have to find a teacher first.

Robin: Oh...

Sasha: I won't, you know, pursue the idea of getting into Northwestern or college, prestige college, I... I need a good teacher, so this is the first thing for me to think about.

Robin: Oh... I didn't know musicians chose college that way. First, you find the teacher you want...

Sasha: Oh., NO, NO, NO! This is... this is my way to... to...

Robin: That's your way?

Sasha: Yeah, of course,... This is like a... a dentist, you... you have to trust your doctor...

Robin: Ah hah...

Sasha: ...your dentist...

Robin: Ah hah...

Sasha: ... and, since you have to pay, this is another reason to chose carefully...

Robin: Ah hah, okay.. Umm, what instrument do you play?

Sasha: Piano, but this is not my major... uh, ...a former EH(!) future, maybe, future conductor, and I graduated in Ukraine. I...am a music teacher... Theory of Music and choir director for now.

Robin: Right now?

Sasha: For now.

Robin: But are you a choir conductor now?

Sasha: No.

Robin: Oh, that's what you did in Ukraine.

Sasha: This is my education.

Robin: I see...ah hah... Who..., the..., where do the people come from who are part of the choir?... Because that's not in a church. Usually, at church we have a lot of choirs from churches here.

Sasha: Right, I had some chur..., in Ukraine, I had some church choirs to lead, I...I did, and my main work, would say, was at the university of my city as a choir director, so...

Robin: Oh...

Sasha: ...university, State...State University...

Robin: ...as...okay...a university choir, ah hah...

Sasha: ...and I had lots of experience. My college choir - singing in the choir...

Robin: You think that being a musician helped you learn English faster than other people?

Sasha: Not faster. Maybe,... always brains - I don't want to say I have more brains or less brains -, but brains, in any case, brain... any situation, brains will help you to learn. But I think from what I can see associating with my classmates or other mates, would say,...(laughter)...uh, my pitch, I have...

Robin: ...pitch...

Sasha: ...pitch...

Robin: ...ah hah...

Sasha: ... absolute pitch...

Robin: ...perfect...

Sasha:...perfect pitch, right,... heh...,and.. uh, maybe, that helps... not maybe, it...it definitely helps.

Robin: ...probably helps...

Sasha: ...right, but I do what I hear and I know other people do what they hear, so from what... from the result I can say that I hear better.

Robin: ...Ah hah...Did you study English a lot in Ukraine before you came here?

Sasha: No, not at all.

Robin: Really?

Sasha: Really!

Robin: I can't believe this. How long have you been here?

Sasha: Listen to my first tape. This is my third tape.

Robin: Oh... oh, so you started at level three?

Sasha: One.

Robin: Oh... this is your third interview. Right, they do it at level one, and, then, level three and level five. Have you been studying at National all this time?

Sasha: Yep, for...

Robin: Since level one?

Sasha:...one year and two...

Robin: One year and two ... how many months?

Sasha: Two and a half.

Robin: Well,... oh,...this is...uh...very exciting because your English is so good. Now I know what National's capable of producing.

Sasha: Yep... because I began, and I was torturing...right(?)...the teachers. May I say...can I?...

Robin: Yeah, you can say that.

Sasha: Maybe, without any... eh huh...(laughter)... quotation marks, but they gave me a lot--this school, and this Language Institute. What I have now... that's all...

Robin: Since you're a teacher, what methods... okay...you probably judged the teachers here because you're a teacher. How would you teach a language class or what would you do differently from the teachers that you've had? What kind of methods did work for you?

Sasha: Uh... All methods worked for me. I had great teachers. First-- J.R. She, you know, helped me to step into the language, and that was a good school, to say this in Russian, so good beginning, very good beginning. She answered all my questions I had at that time, and that was a good push...

Robin:...Um hum...

Sasha: Is that a noun?

Robin: What, "push?"

Sasha: ...push...

Robin: No, that's a... yeah, that's a noun.

Sasha:...for me to continue getting better..my language...then, I had Michael F. for two levels, and...

Robin:...for two levels or for level two?

Sasha: No, for two levels; level two, and level three, which was a great experience. He would answer all my questions, and even more.

He would try to explain how Americans feel this tense or the difference between the tenses. In any case..., so I'm talking too much...

Robin: No,... uh uh, I want you to.

Sasha: ...okay... then Judith K.--level four--gave a lot, but I would say she could give more, and I think I was able to get more, but ...program...uh, so this kind of closing herself when she felt "It's time!", and that's the only, I'm saying, the only negative thing I would mention. And now, lots of review (Level V)... very good teacher again, but I'm...I wanted to fight and get more and more, so, sometimes, it's too boring since all of...most of the trick questions, right(?)...

Robin: Trick questions..?

Sasha: Right.

Robin: Yah...

Sasha: ...we're talking about now, in Level V, I probably most of them I have answered, and asked, and got the answers in levels; two, three, and four.

Robin: Oh... I'm not familiar with the trick questions...

Sasha: Oh...

Robin: ...you mean the tricky questions?

Sasha: Tricky, tricky... I'm sorry, you see...

Robin: If you say "trick questions," that means the teacher's trying to trick you.

Sasha: Oh, no!

Robin: If you say tricky, it means, you know, they're difficult.

Sasha: ...or details... many details, I ...I..I..answered...

Robin: ...so you...you learned a lot of those things in level three and four.

Sasha: Yeah, that's thanks to my teachers, and now, lots of really (inaudible)...

Robin: Oh, that's good though. I mean I don't think that was a waste of time, because you feel better about your English, you know that if you had learned it before, then, you feel better, more confident now.

Sasha: ... and we can talk on a new level with the teacher...we can talk. He gives lots of time after classes...

Robin: Oh, really?...after class ...you sit and talk with him?

Sasha: Yeah...

Robin: Ah...

Sasha: Yes...

Robin:...that's nice...

Sasha:...uh... I'm taking too much...

Robin:...yeah... your classmates will be upset with you.. no that's okay...

Analysis of Language Institute Interviews

Interview I

All questions appeared to have been answered appropriately. The instructor seemed to have been impressed with his pronunciation.

Interview II

Sasha misinterpreted one question about where his parents were studying. This instructor was also impressed with Sasha's accent.

Sasha also suggests that better instructors for the Language Lab are needed.

Interview III

Sasha's utterances are now much longer. In fact, he is now apologizing for talking too much. This instructor too is surprised at Sasha's excellent pronunciation. Sasha is not shy about suggesting that the Level V curriculum is too repetitious.

Musical background

When Robin asked Alex if music helped him learn English faster, Alex replied that it did not. One must use his/her brain actively. Music has helped Alex listen more closely. His strategy for learning correct English pronunciation is to break down English words into its parts.

He finds that the vowels in English words are not represented graphically, as they are in Russian. A word like 'good' may be pronounced by a second language learner as 'gooood,' (like the 'oo' of an owl), but in actuality the sound is more like goouhd.

An interesting remark that Alex made was that English is a musical language. This is one of the reasons he loves the English language.

In the Language Lab, no effort was made to teach correct English pronunciation, according to Alex. The computer programs that are provided stressed additional grammatical practice. This is not surprising in view of the stress on correct grammar which takes place in the Language Institute. Alex stopped going to the Language Lab, since he felt it was not helpful to him.

(A retrospective on reading processes and instruction)

BURKE INTERVIEW MODIFIED FOR OLDER READERS (BIMOR)

(Original by C. Burke, adaptations by D. Watson)

1. When you are reading and you come to something that gives you trouble, what do you do? do you ever do anything else?
2. Who is a good reader in English that you know?
3. What makes ________________________ a good reader?
4. Do you think that ____________________ ever comes to something that gives him trouble when he is reading?
5. When ___________________ does come to something that gives him/her trouble, what do you think he/she does about it?
6. If you knew that someone was having difficulty reading in English, how would you help that person?
7. What would a teacher do to help that person?
8. How did you learn to read?
9. Is there anything you would like to change about your reading?
10. Describe yourself as a reader. What kind of reader are you?
11. What do you read routinely, like everyday or every week?
12. What do you like most of all to read?
13. Can you remember any special book or the most memorable thing you have ever read?
14. What is the most difficult thing you have read?

I administered the Burke Interview to Sasha on May 7, 1994. These are his responses.

Sasha: #1. "When you are reading and you come to something that gives you trouble, what do you do? Do you ever do anything else?"

Sasha: When I'm reading what I do not know, I try to re-read it and try to understand it from the context. If I still do not know it, I do not still read the book. If I'm still interested in it (the topic), I choose the lower level of a book about the same topic.

Ann: Very clever

Sasha: Very logical..."Do you ever do anything else?" If this is the only thing I do not understand in the book (you're saying things that cause trouble), unability to understand or trouble means you have to look up things in another book...this kind of trouble but you have to go somewhere else to find the information.

If trouble is your unability to understand the word in context (in Russian), when I read in English, of course, I have trouble reading words...meaning that this is, I'm learning this...

When I'm reading in my native language and need more information about this, want to know more about this particular sentence, so I go searching for another piece of information to make everything clear and do everything what gives me satisfaction.

If I do not understand something and I'm not interested in that, I might be satisfied with that part...OK, I don't know that...that's OK...First I'm not reading that kind of books...or this is what I'm doing on purpose...I will leave it because this is trouble for me, I do not understand it...I have to leave it...

#2. "Who is a good reader in English that you know?" Anna K ...

Ann: What does she do? What does she read?

Sasha: Articles in newspapers, very often I can see that she has a very good level of comprehension, understanding what she reads about; she has a rich vocabulary and a long way away from me...

Ann: Have you every suggested that she read other kinds of materials other than newspapers?

Sasha: Yah, we talked about many books; actually we talked about articles in different newspapers and magazines...so things I do not understand she tries to explain and let me feel many things. Many times she helped me understand and begin to feel that kind of grammar pattern, right?

Ann: Has she ever read orally to you? Did it help your comprehension?

Sasha: Yah, of course, many words I do not know. I would hear and I know how to pronounce them, this is very important since English pronunciation is crazy for us.

Ann: What sorts of articles does she give you?

Sasha: Many, many...on art, politics, sometimes on philosophy, sometimes on music, visual art (paintings, sculpture), singers, players, composers, discs, books, political situations in my country, different countries, most common is, were from my country and America, but somehow related to the question of living here...

Ann: Would you say she is utlizing a whole language approach with you bringing in all the arts?

Sasha: This is very important that I read articles, sometimes books, magazines, things I need to know. This improvement in vocabulary, language gives another positive thing which is I am learning a language, I am learning it from a way the best way to learn, the most useful in the future--about music, different kinds of art--this gives me language, the part I have to know for my future.

Ann: So, very good

Sasha: #3 "What makes Anna Kim a good reader?" She read a lot; she has a large and rich vocabulary. And she understands everything that's being said in an article or book. And of course she understands everything between the lines. What makes a good reader; good experience in it, being born for reading and able to read. Someone, your parents, the God, gave you not only the ability but the interest in reading. This is pleasurable and the more you do this, the more pleasure and improvement you get...

Ann: I like to keep abreast of current events...

Sasha: "Abreast" means?

Ann: Keep up with what's happening; you have to read to do that...

Sasha: So you are modernistic person; so you like to make progress too. Of course you are not reading only newspapers and stupid articles with politic situations; you like to keep up with things about your subject; you like to improve yourself in these subjects by reading new books, keeping up with this process of getting new information. You improve yourself; this is being kind of being honest to yourself... I really appreciate this in Anna Kim... This is very valuable thing...not only desire to read...but always ability, no laziness...nothing, this is real luck, right?

Ann: I believe we live to learn...and so

Sasha: Not to improve ourselves...this is not honest first of all to ourselves; we're not fooling anyone but ourselves...

I'm talking too much; sometimes I'm trying to bare my ideas, express my ideas while talking...

#4 "Do you think that Anna K... ever comes to something that gives her trouble when she is reading?" I've never seen it... I think she does come in subjects she doesn't know something about...I know when I explain something in music and we read together sometimes, not often enough, some things about music, composers, and if she doesn't understand, I being, understanding, due to her what is being said by letters, I'm explaining what is being said in meaning. She helps me understand language; each word which I don't know. I try to explain the meaning of these language patterns, the sentences that the person is talking about...

Ann: Do you mean in Russian?

Sasha: Everything that we read together in English...about music. I do not know what the word means, but you do not understand what the context means. The same way I would ask her about Biology if I were interested or the English language, which I am...

Ann: I want to interject at this time...

Sasha: Inter...what?

Ann: Interject; put in...why I have chosen Sasha as my subject...

You have to have a subject who can verbalize what he's thinking and he's exceptional at doing it...you have to have a subject who can with these kind of questions who can explain what is going on in his mind; metacognition is what we call it...

And so, yes, he's very good at explaining. Our relationship is rather unique; I am his supervisor, he's an S.I. Leader, I am the Coordinator so I am his boss. I help him with his reading; he is my teacher when it comes to music. And I would say we have a true collaborative learning situation. We exchange roles; I am his mentor, he is my mentor, he's enriching my life with his musical knowledge. We do recitals together, I have learned a lot about music, about composers, and so, yes, we learn from each other. It's a unique situation and I feel very fortunate to have a subject like Sasha.

Sasha: I feel very fortunate to have an 'object' like ...(laughter)

Sasha: #5 "When Anna K comes to something that gives her trouble what do you think she does about it?" Troubles in music, maybe? This is the only thing I can imagine; not in English, of course. She has a very high level of knowledge in English. She asks me what that means (in music)...If I cannot explain, I'm trying, trying...She has a very very unusual desire to listen to me to the end, to understand me, everything I say, so it really improves my learning the language, since nothing is being left, nothing is ever left...she didn't understand that...I can explain it...this stimulates me to find a way to say it...

She never fools herself...what was I talking about... troubles are here to trouble us, to stimulate us to improve ourselves which is very important. The more we fool ourselves, the more troubles, the less troubles is left.

Ann: #6 "If you knew that someone was having difficulty reading in English, how would you help that person?"

Sasha: Read more; troubles...the more troubles you've gone through, the less quantity of troubles you have. This is like milk; you just pour it out...

Ann: So you would recommend just reading more...

Sasha: Just practice; this is the way we learn...
Keep reading and you will get through it. Then you will get into another problem, situation and you will read through, read through.

Sasha: #7 "What would a teacher do to help that person?" A teacher must explain everything that a person doesn't understand...not just give an explanation. For example: "Allow" means "let someone do something"...No; interesting situations in which this word in a particular sentence can be used the best.

A good teacher would say, "Oh you always hear it on the train; No littering, smoking is permitted, or allowed"...connects the word to life or subject that a student is interested in. This word will become meaningful and relative [sic]...

Ann: Relevant...

Sasha: You will feel it, not only memorize it...you will not have to memorize it...it will be in you...This is one of the ways a teacher could help a lot...explanation in a good way...when I learned "postponed"...this might inrich [sic] vocabulary a lot...Not just throwing "called off means postponed"; I didn't know what "called off" means; I didn't know what "postponed" means...

Ann: #8 "How did you learn to read?" I assume that means in English...At what point did you, in the Language Institute? Did they make you read in the interview...were you able to read anything?

Sasha: No they didn't because I wasn't able...

Ann: They gave you an oral interview; I would like to listen to it..

Sasha: Oh, no...this is not done...My first steps in English. Lev. III with Bob K. in November; they keep it and will use it. The last interview after Lev. V; they will see if there is any progress.

Ann: Do you remember when you began reading, which level?

Sasha: We began in Level I..."Roberto Barone is a student. He is from Italy." Our teacher brought us very simple texts, dictations about a person who came here and had to learn the language. The vocabulary was easy.

I did not like the reading book in Lev. II. It was about different animals, situations, plants...I wasn't interested...they had some vocabulary...we had to learn them...they think 100 words, five levels; they think these are the most useful words...they are...but these are just 100...

Lev. III; I didn't like the reading; maybe I wasn't prepared yet; sometimes it was very simple...Sometimes I was prepared, sometimes I wasn't...

Level IV; was very interesting book; many good things about that book.

Level V; not a bad book, so it talked about general problems, society problems: sexes, black/white conflict

Ann: Were these short articles?

Sasha: No, in Level V they are rather bigger.....3-4 pages...so when you do not understand a lot...the vocabulary...doesn't help you...a lot of text...psychologically, these are big, big pieces...smaller ones would be better...not four pages at a time...

Ann: In whole language they believe you should use the whole thing...

Sasha: Oh, no, no...texts are much bigger than 3-4 pages...

Ann: In C.D. [Communication Development] we use novels, sometimes like "Catcher in the Rye."

Sasha: So from short to ...this is the way to learn...

#9 "Is there anything you would like to change about your reading?" I don't have time to read...Yep, of course...

I would like to improve my reading.

Ann: Are you satisfied about the way you are reading? Read faster? Understand, increase your vocabulary...

Sasha: I found this word "in Greece, increase", but I didn't use it until you used it. Now I understand how to use it, for sure; it becomes mine. So if there's no practice even after reading...what J.K.did not badly in the first part of class...she worked even though we'd done that already... she worked with the words..she paid attention

Reading in class here; talking about what you have read; this is the most valuable...

I am reading better, reading faster; I am getting accustomed to the grammar. In class, I would like to change one thing; we read mostly at home. I would like any teacher talk about difficulties in class, but I do it on my own by staying after class and asking the teacher. He kindly answers any questions...

Ann: That's what we teach our students to do; be aggressive and ask questions...

Sasha: Right, not to fool themselves... I always speak, ask lots of questions. In Level V, less. In Levels II, III, and IV, lots of questions about grammar, vocabulary

Ann: Were there questions preceding reading? Did the teacher pose questions before you read, to set a purpose, give the background?

Sasha: J. K. did many interesting things to get us in reading.

"This is the topic." "What can you say about this topic?"

Guessing about the topic. On the way we would pick up some vocabulary from reading that section. And coming to that point, beginning reading, we would be prepared. M. F. was so good, but J.K. was the best for reading.

Ann: After you finished reading, what sort of questions were asked?

Factual, recall? Give me an example...

Sasha: We were talking about this paragraph, the main idea, it says something about the topic. In order to answer the question in a different way...to explain in our own words...

Ann: So you would rephrase the question...

Sasha: Not rephrase the question; the idea of the topic or paragraph or sentence...

Ann: You would paraphrase. One of the types of questions that teachers are encouraged to do is to ask inferential questions.

Sasha: Which means...?

Ann: Not what you've just read, but what you predict or how you would apply what you've just read. Say the situation changed; What are the implications? What is your opinion?

Sasha: Oh, many opinions, what would you do in such a situation?

How is it in your country?

Ann: Comparison...

Sasha: She played with the reading...

Ann: She expanded on it; tried to make it meaningful...

Sasha: Very good thing she did; she read sentences with the new words before she explained then those words. She would put the explanations. "They put off the meeting since the weather was bad." She would say "postponed" instead of "put off." She would make everything easier.

Ann: So you would get the meaning from the context.

Sasha: Right, right. But more in Level V. Bob K. stressed reading and understanding; comprehension from the context. The book is really helpful...

Ann: Because in reading theory, after you have learned the alphabet and you have learned how to decode words, you use top-down processing. You don't read every word; you guess and predict...that's a good reader. And the same thing in second languages too. You should be able to predict.

Sasha: This is what I'm doing. What I do not understand from the context, then I will search, pick up the words that I feel is the most basic, important in this sentence, from those which I don't understand I will pick the fewest amount of words to understand.

Ann: That's what we call 'metacognition.' Some students don't know that; they just look up every word.

Sasha: I use it; that's why I can skeem [skim] a text and sometimes don't understand every word, but the meaning of the whole idea of it I'm catching that.

Ann: Good. Some people don't know they're not catching it. How do you know if you're catching it? How do you check yourself?

Sasha: Good question, how do I check? I reread the sentence and I look at the context before this sentence and after and try to project the meaning of this sentence onto how it is related what was said before or after. Mostly this book I have they have new vocabulary, so first I learn the vocabulary with a couple of sentences of using those new words. And then I will find these words in the text already knowing them. I will see maybe another different using them. I will remember seeing those words in the previous text, previous chapter. I will go back and check what was the context there, how it worked there.

In Chapter 3 you will have vocabulary and inside the text you will have a couple of new words. You will not know them, you do not have to know them yet, but in a couple of chapters you will find these new words from Chapter 3 which were not on the vocabulary list for Chapter 3 and you will be prepared for those words without having to learn them or look them up. I saw it, I had seen it there...good book.

How do I check? Intuition, talent...

If I really feel I'm not sure. 99%, I'm picking up and looking up in the dictionary, the fewest number of the words I do not understand in this sentence. I check them, one word, two words, the least... That usually helps; that adds up my sureness that I'm right with my guessing

Ann: Good; so you do lots of guessing as you read...

Sasha: When there's nothing else to do...(laughter)

Ann: Well, that's what good readers do...

Sasha: I have lots of time on the train, so I prefer reading. I don't always have under my hand a dictionary. This is skeeming...

Ann: Scanning.. ..

Sasha: Scanning is another word?

Ann: Scanning is looking for a particular word; skimming is reading fast....

Sasha: Right; I'm trying to find those difficulties to work on them at home wherever I can...

Ann: Do you underline them?

Sasha: Yah, oh, you can have my reading books, papers...lots of work in pencil or pen in ink, lots of things, many questions, since this is reading. Not Level I, not Level II; this is Level V...usual we had ads from newspapers, magazines. In Level IV, Art Buchwald, Dear Emmy, Andy, Abbie...so that's the way they talk to Americans...this is not for me, Level IV or Level V students. So I have heavy amounts of questions which I ask my teachers...

Ann: Do you write them in the margins? In English?

Sasha: Mostly; this is very interesting thing...when I can, I do; when I can't, I don't...but I prefer the

English language; maybe it's more convenient while working with the language. Work its out the best; even thinking in English plus writing during this process of learning the text what's written.

I'm trying, I'm trying. Sometimes I usually when it's not a hard word I look up what I do not understand in an English-English dictionary to see if I understand in English. I write the explanation in English next to the word. But sometimes that's not enough, it's more confusing...my learning is in progress. When I am looking up the word and do not understand, or I'm feeling more confused, I'm looking up in American English/Russian dictionary and then go back to English/English dictionary to see if I understand better what the explanation is afterwards.

Ann: When we teach vocabulary, we ask the students to write the sentence the word was in. When they look it up in a dictionary, they still don't know how to use the word correctly

Sasha: Like in Russian or any language, one word might mean two things. For example, last week I found a new form of the word 'failed.' "Last week I failed an exam." Now I know, "I failed to work," so I wasn't successful doing my work.

Ann: Didn't attempt to...

Sasha: That was new, and I asked and now I know. But I paid attention to that old word; I had known that word. I didn't find in dictionary, I underlined and asked. So I'm putting myself into very very tight difficulties. I'm searching for difficulties always. The more questions, the less questions is, are left; the fewer questions are left.

Ann: Have you ever heard the expression 'fail-safe?' Prevention against failure...in some movies, bombs, fail-safe procedures...Safe from failure...breakdown. During the war, that expression became popular...

Sasha: This is the answer, this is how I check myself...

Ann: This is why I chose you; many people could not say what they do even in their first language, let alone in their second language. They have done a lot of research with English-speaking students, but not so much with second language students because it's in a second language whether they can express themselves as you can on how they process material, so the length of time is fine because you're unearthing, you're expanding, you're developing, you're thinking while you are trying to answer the questions as to how you do it.

Sasha: I read and reread it many times depending on the difficulty of the material.

Ann: Would you say you have to reread when you read something about music, as many times as something else?

Sasha: Music is sometimes boring because I understand it, too many things are familiar. Terminology and definitions I already knew in Russia. When I do not understand the language, I would work on it. Terminology, explanation in English. But still different language--once, twice in the future simple books I will have to read them.

Ann: You tell me you are currently reading about a musician in your native language.

Sasha: Scriabin

Ann: Did you read much about music in Russia?

Sasha: I tried; once I began the same book it didn't go. I stopped, I didn't like the language, I didn't like the way the author talked. Now being smarter than two years ago, I looked through that language. I didn't pay attention to the language that the author uses. I paid attention to higher class things; I paid attention to what he is saying; I paid attention to what is important from what he is saying, I paid attention to what is important for me, what I want, what I expect. I would say I was much more prepared than before, that I needed this book

Ann: Prepared in what way?

Sasha: In psychological way. Now I really wanted to read it. I didn't like some things, but the atmosphere of the book at the time it was about I tried to understand it.

Ann: Do you think that reading this book in Russian will help you read in English?

Sasha: I would say that reading in Russian will improve my Russian.

I would say my English has improved my Russian a lot, very much so considering the fact that I'm getting older and smarter. These are years, the last year, of changes in myself inside me, was the year of learning the English language. I would say that while I'm reading in the Russian language, sometimes I am comparing how would it sound in English. This obsession, it became an obsession; English, English, English.

I am reading Scriabin, but the mind is giving out the information, but now it's time to think how it would sound in English. English made progress, since I have to think what I'm going to say in English three times, doubly better and check before I say it and that's the tendency I've got in Russian. I became more accurate in Russian, checking it because of the English. This tendency with the grammar, the meaning, the tendency to have the shortest way to saying the same thing, the easiest way to say something, the most understandable, the most logical...right?

Ann: Some researchers have theorized that English is a more linear language.

Sasha: Linear?

Ann: Things progress logically; other cultures and languages are more circular, circuitous.

How would you compare English and Russian? Are they saying it the fastest way as you might expect in English?

Sasha: Russian is a lot different; bad Russian. I thought, most people think Russian is more emotional, most likely, which it is, than English

Ann: Like the music...

Sasha: OK, OK; Different cultures, of course; this is enjoyable to hear the stream of the speech, to enjoy the beauty of the language, how it sounds, the vocabulary, but here in English you are saying many things pretty simple, exactly, to that point you want to reach.

It seems sometimes too simple, my view, the way I look at the (English) language...sometimes too dry, but I like the tendency, the trend to be very careful with your language, to be as short as you can in length, and I would think if our Russian literature, Pushkin and everyone else, they are the best mix of the American English tendency having to do with length, to be short, and to be very beautiful in speaking, to show the beauty of the language which is from Russian. That's it.

This mix of American tendency to make everything as short as possible and to make it more attractive, not dry ('ooltra'as we say it, ultra-dry and ultra-short) this is what I would like to improve in my Russian having the experience of learning English.

Ann: In your writing?

Sasha: In my writing, even in Russian; I would be more logical, much shorter, much straight and try to use the beauty of the vocabulary. This is what is the art--the shortest way unless it's in the artist's mind, the idea to make it longer or difficult so the shortest way, the rightest way, the most vivid way to express yourself, and using the whole richness of Russian vocabulary. The way they speak, the way they do the language.

Ann: At this point I would like to ask you how they teach reading in Russia. Do they use good literature from the first grade or did they under Communism create special books extolling patriotism and morality?

Sasha: Of course, that's why many courses are not very interesting at all. The history of the Communist Party, history of the state, not history of Russia, with laws, that tendency to communize everything

Ann: Was that boring for you? Because there's a whole area on moral education (in Russia).

Sasha: Lots, lots. Now they have new moral education, now they have ideology; they have to clean it up, maybe worse; sometimes they do it in a worse way than Communists did before.

Ann: But did they because of your wonderful collection of Russian literature, did they introduce it in the upper grades?

Sasha: From the very beginning literature for children. Pushkin from third to fourth--fairy tales, not so famous authors about nature, its beauty, animals. They do not give us fairy tales at schools; very strange; I just realized that. But fairy tales I read before school.

Ann: Maybe under Communism they didn't want fairy tales.

Sasha: I don't know...Maybe they want strictness...nature. It doesn't bite

Ann: When I was in Russia there were many sets of children's fairy tales.

Sasha: This is for kindergarten literature. In school they try to make you think seriously. Animals.

Ann: The Germans have a big tradition of fairy tales.

Sasha: We have our s....... fairy tellers, even though it's sometimes too boring, but some of....They try to grow children loving their grodyna (country), nature, to make them to like their animals, to be brothers,

Ann: Can you remember how reading was taught to you? Did you do much reading aloud? The class listened? And questions were asked?

Sasha: Yep, I remember enjoyed reading at home. Comprehension questions. I had a good teacher from 4th grade to eighth.

Ann: The same teacher for four years?

Sasha: She was our mentor of our class. I would love to go to her class now because I didn't do it in such a way--full way

Ann: To take full advantage of what she offered...

Sasha: I was very sensitive; I can't read that book, the language what he said, his opinions all over the page instead of my expectation him to give information, serious information which I would think and consider and then think and have my own opinion and check this opinion with his. Now I read this book and feel I ...

Ann: It's well known that you can read the same book years later in a different way and we have changed. So what kinds of books did you read in Russia, only music books?

Sasha: Didn't have enough time. Lots of textbooks I had to read. I wanted to read about musicians. When I was a child, I would read, and reread many times Sherlock Holmes.

Ann: You mean you had Sherlock Holmes in Russian?

Sasha: We had a very good movie, lots of parts, series about Sherlock Holmes that interested me a lot. They created interesting way to express, to show the English country, the people so very interestingly they read this book. Many interesting movies

Ann: What age was this?

Sasha: Oh, first that was very strange; I watched the movie maybe eight, ten. Then for the first time I was interested in reading after I had already. I remember seventeen times I read the book when I was in eighth grade and I enjoyed that.

I like Russian classics. I feel that I'm an intelligent person. I know my parents made a lot for me, but if you cannot, but if you don't want, how can you force yourself, especially being a child? Of course, you will not do anything to educate yourself. Now when I feel it's time, I felt it, you know this coming to America did a lot for me; preparation to come, for leaving that country, many thoughts, lots of thinking, that made me to think. I learned how to think and that was the impulse for me waking up as a talented person, interest in reading, in writing, new interests in music, on a new level, very much stronger. And I remember that I changed two months before leaving Ukraine. I remember something happened, began to happen and it continues to now and when I'm reading those papers from Level I and II. Yep, I wouldn't write now those papers. Great changes...Maybe that's why I do not prefer writing now in English, since I do not own the language in that way I would like to and I expect the language to be the tool to express myself. So I don't want to begin writing yet; high expectations, what you're saying is directly depending on how I'm saying; this is very important to me. That's why I prefer reading and enjoy reading on my level; still I'm changing.

Ann: I predict that as you grow to own the English language, write in English, you may also write in Russian which you have avoided because you have a greater appreciation for Russian, as well. Am I right?

Sasha: You say what I cannot formulate.

Ann: You said you did not like to write in Russian either. Now you enjoy Russian and like to compare the two languages.

Sasha: I enjoy 'swimming' in those two languages...

Ann: And I think writing is the ultimate expression once you own a language, maybe more so than music because whatever you create is new. There's no sentence that you cannot create that anyone else has created. I predict that someday you will write beautifully both in English and Russian. It cannot be otherwise...

Sasha: I won't formally improve my Russian, go to school etc., but due to English. Right?

Ann: Right, as Vygotsky says, and Cummins--there's an underlying proficiency beneath all languages, so if you're good in one you're good in another. And if you don't have one, you can't learn a second. So you're bound to transfer back to your native language. Do you know Ukrainian... because it's another language?

Sasha: There's not much of a difference but I wasn't that fortunate.

Ann: You had to learn Russian in school...the Ukrainian was discouraged...

Sasha: Ukrainian was encouraged

Ann: Really?

Sasha: Right, in the last years very much so...perestroika

Ann: Getting back to my questions...you went to a music school beginning at what age?

Sasha: Five

Ann: They stressed music but also reading and the other skills?

Sasha: Textbooks, of course, yah, mostly music, but usually the teachers brought those other things up in a very good way. But I liked textbooks because there were musical examples there; I liked to read about them. That's why I read...that atmosphere...that ocean; I liked not to swim but to take a bath.

Ann: Were these books well illustrated with pictures?

Sasha: Of course; decorations of opera settings, historical portraits

Ann: Did you ever write about music when you were in Russia?

Sasha: Yes, a lot, and now I see that that wasn't that valuable.

Ann: Why, writing is valuable in any subject...

Sasha: Because *I still write between a topic*. For that period it was OK, but I'm not satisfied about that.

Ann: *Would you write more readily if you could pick a musical topic now?*

Sasha: Readily?

Ann: More eagerly...

Sasha: *Of course; if I picked any topic, not musical, but if I think I have to say something.*..

Ann: So currently what are the topics that have been assigned to you in Level V?

Sasha: Some questions that I have to open...

Ann: Address?

Sasha: Questions we have to answer in our compositions..."Who do you think must invite first on a date, she or he?" You see, topics are so ridiculous...

Ann: Is there no way to negotiate a different topic with your teacher? What's another topic?

Sasha: "Who should pay for the date?"

Ann: Is that a separate topic?

Sasha: No topics; questions...you have to create a topic...

Ann: Create an essay from the questions?

Sasha: Yep, those questions do not interest me at all. I have to force myself to drop some work. I don't want to say I'm not on that level of thinking, but maybe that's why I can't make myself think about that. "Do you agree with the statement that women are the weaker sex?"

Ann: So these are your three assignments?

Sasha: No, a new one; this might be very interesting..."A person who has influenced me the most in my life"; maybe this one...we'll see since now being smarter or now I'm ready to work and if parents or teachers couldn't make me study or read a lot as a child, now I appreciate it, I'm able to appreciate it a lot. My reading now I'm able to appreciate it. I couldn't understand -------. First of all it's in English...lots of historical things, social things...you have to go to Russia and find the answers in Russia, but not go to Russia and put walls around you...OK, nice, nice Kremlin; this is what I would like to go, and to explain, to feel as I am beginning to feel American...what they are, to feel how they are to project...talking about literature. I couldn't understand it in Russian...about souls...so strange, so long and I have to read it, no I won't read it...For example, "Now I cannot stop drinking that fountain of *geneology (?).*" *I cannot* stop ...Pushkin; I like to read Pushkin to read stories; Now I can appreciate and not to think about what he's talking about..."He opens the door, he burns the house," but to appreciate the way it's written and enjoy it; maybe much more than the story. #12 What do you like most of all to read? Different things; biographies, historical books,

Ann: History of Russia?

Sasha: History of Russian music, Russian classics, Doestoevsky, Vogel, anything around music

Ann: #13; Can you remember any special book or the most memorable thing you have ever read?

Sasha:Now I'm reading Testimony or Memoirs of Shostakovich; I look forward to that book becoming very very important in my life, since I wasn't able to know such things in Russia. Here I'm hungrier to know such things. I had seen this book and had been looking at it for a long time before I felt I was able to pick it up from the shelf and open it and read.

Ann: And having just finished Level V, you felt ready to tackle such a book. It's due June 30--two weeks. This is from the Music Section of the Fine Arts Dept. of the Chicago Public Library, published in New York, Harper &

Row, 1979. As related to and edited by Simon Volkov.

Sasha: I would say this is maybe the most difficult thing I have ever read--the 'Preface.' Right, say it...because we talked with Ann about an hour ago about some Shostakovich's written pages and I said that it's much simpler to read those pages than that preface since the book is a story and this preface is a critique about Shostkovich's time, about working on this book with him. This is not Shostakovich's actual writing. These are his words from short writings--shorthand writing. He took notes in shorthand.

Ann: He didn't have a tape recorder?

Sasha: Shostakovich [was] offered using a tape recorder, but we discarded the idea because Shostakovich would stiffen before a microphone--a reaction to his obligatory official radio speeches. You see, I didn't touch this part for a week; now I read all the words

Ann: But it all came back. What do you think his obligatory radio speeches were about?

Sasha: Oh, you know, he wasn't writing them. Those were written ideological speeches pointed to the Soviet peoples. He would really suffer in front of the microphone. He insisted on not publishing this book until after his death. We always learned until he dies; two conjunctions.

Ann: Like Jackie Kennedy; everything secret until after her death.

Sasha: His only insistent desire was the book to be published posthumously. He was not willing to undergo new ordeals.

Ann: You enjoyed Sherlock Holmes as a child, and now you are sharing this book with me , your first English text.

Sasha: Oh, thanks God...

Ann: Why do you say that?

Sasha: People don't study foreign languages; this is very hard.

No, no, no; this extends your sight of the world a lot.

Ann: Yes, I should study Russian so I could read Russian literature. Lya speaks Russian, but she doesn't know how to read or write it. She can hear it and speak it.

Sasha: If she speaks it, she will be able to read it. She knows the alphabet? She puts things together? She hears things...the same things that she hears from my mouth when I'm talking? She hears them and understands the meaning? She may not understand the meaning; the trouble is that the language has changed. The influence of Spanish and English... sometimes I'm talking in Russian, but I'm saying English things.. English sentences, tenses.

Take a bus... never you will say this (in Russian). You would say "sit on the bus," "enter the bus," but not "take a bus." In Russian I now say "take a bus." If I go to Russia and say this, they would say "where did you take the bus?"

I have been close to this, but Lya has been out. The only heritage she received is a knowledge her parents of the language...

Ann: Lya says she has a fantastic vocabulary. She used to sit under the table while her mother was talking to her friends.

What is the last question? What is the most difficult thing you have to read?

Sasha: Should I put ------? It's a critique of Shostakovich.

Ann: A critique is more analyzing the style...

Sasha: Right, this is analyzing his life, his way of thinking

Ann: What is the most difficult thing you have read in Russian?

Sasha: None of the ones I have read, but maybe theory and harmony, melody, rhythm, deep researches, studies..

Ann: You said you had trouble reading Gogol...

Sasha: I didn't understand them.

ANSWERS TO WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE

I taped Sasha's answers as he was filling out the Writing Questionaire on April 21, 1994 at the beginning of Level V (Appendix C). This gives an interesting picture of the writing strategies of a second language student at the college level. It also provides some information on his family's struggles with acculturation.

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TRANSCRIPT OF WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE

Sashă: Writing questionnary..."Please check the statements that correctly describe you. I am a native American student." No; what should I put?

Ann: Just nothing.

Sasha: Just nothing...OK. "English is not my first language." That's right. [He understands negative questions.]

"English is not spoken at home." Mostly so.

"I have had ___ years of English." OK, I have had one year of English, of studying English. Right? You should have put an 's' in parentheses...right?

"On a scale of between one and seven"---(scale means kind of a ladder?), please indicate how you feel about writing in English."

#1 (first)..."I believe I am a good writer (in English)"---speaking better.

Ann: We're just doing 'writing'...

Sasha: 3 (sometimes)

#2; "I believe I am a poor writer," since I do not have a vocabulary enough. What I was telling you some day; when I think in English. It's still hard to think and write in English. It's better for me to think in Russian, write in English and then to translate into English. I do what I can do...

Sasha: #3; "I feel anxious when I read an essay question." An essay question; OK. Anxious means nervous, troubled, dah [yes]? Essay question...what's essay? Very familiar word...

Ann: Like they do with you; What is the difference between men and women? Remember the question you were answering [in writing]? That's an essay question.

Sasha: No, I don't feel...

Ann: Good, say 'never'...

Sasha: Never; I don't feel anxious ever...

Ann: Good

Sasha: ...studying English; but this "I beleive I'm a good writer, I believe I'm a poor writer"---these indicates something different. This is the process of studying; feeling or not feeling anxious. Emotion...

Ann: Right...

Sasha: Now, how I, what I think about it, but this is how I do it, how I study and what I result...

Sasha: "I become confused when there are several parts to a question." In a question, several parts.

Ann: They may say "Describe your favorite holiday; describe the food; describe what to wear. There may be several parts to the question.

Sasha: Never, never. "I do not know if I have to answer all parts of a question." If there's a question, you have to answer it. I do know...

Ann: OK...

Sasha: "I am afraid that I might forget to answer one part of the question." Uh, it was, yah, at the very beginning I was concerned about grammar and vocabulary that sometime, Level I, but now, never. Meaning now I understand better what the question is, like in Russian. It's my own; now it becomes my own thing; material to work with. Like in Russian you are asking me something in Russian; it is difficult question, big question, many parts. I understand it so I can work with it.

Sasha: "I often do not underatnd the meaning of a question." If I do not understand words, the vocabulary.

Ann: Maybe Level I

Sasha: Uh, still you can ask me about; sometimes when I do not know vocabulary...because...of

Sasha: #8; "I read each part of an essay question carefully before writing." I read everything carefully, always...

Sasha: #9; "I begin to think of possible ways to answer the question as soon as I have finished reading it." It depends on the vocabulary. I look at it quickly and if I visually catch everything, but if there is something unknown, I have to read it carefully.

Ann: So it depends on the content?

Sasha: "I begin to think of possible ways to answer the question as soon as I have finished reading it." If I can understand it, right, why not? This is the first thing to do; to think...

Sasha: [#10] "I write down all the ideas that come to my mind as I am reading the question." I never write down the ideas if it is a question, "where are you from?" But for compositions, now we have some questions we have to answer, so yah, ideas for compositions or if I have to prepare my tutor lessons, sessions. I predict questions that might be asked, so depends on what kind of questions, the importance of my replying to that question. If you are asking me where I am from, this is not the question I have to work on, write down all the ideas that come to my mind. Depending on the question...

Sasha: #11; "I create a map or outline of my ideas so that I will not forget any of them." First, I, yah, map is not a plan yet; this is a list of ideas. Uh, another kind of map, just a list. Plan, this is easier...

Sasha: #12; "I may write these ideas in my native language. I may also write down my sentences in my native language before translating them into English."

Right, uh, right. I often, sometimes I can say something better in Russian; most of them, some I'm able to say in English, so sometimes, yep...

Sasha: #13; "I often become discouraged because I must look up so many words as I write." Uh, yah, in English, of course, discouragement I felf first month. Still now, but on a new level. I know some things and I feel language. I enjoy what I know and I try now being more experienced in writing, I try not to pay attention to discouragement, which of course exists and not to pay attention to it, not to take notice of it, and I prefer if I write in English, I prefer write constructions. What I can write in English I'm writing in English. What I cannot, I just write in Russian. And the more I go, the far [sic] I go, the less words I have to write in Russian. So those are like small islands in English text, small islands of Russian words that I simply do not know. So I just translate them and put into the compositions. Not anymore; it's stupid [to worry]. It's not worth it...

Ann: To become discouraged?

Sasha: Right. I cannot do it in a year, during one year. Children learn the language since they are born to

Sasha: #14; "The word order of English is different than my native language, so I have difficulty when writing English." Sometimes, but not anymore.

Difficulties were until I got used to, became used to the word order in English.

Ann: Which was about when, what level?

Sasha: I still have it, but not word order. Not anymore. I feel in most cases and I'm prepared to this. By the way, this is very logical your English word order; subject, verb, complement. This is not so difficult. But difficulty in not understanding is one difficulty. Difficult in not being used to; this is another kind.

Sasha: #15; I have trouble with the mechanics of writing in English.

I can say, I can see many Russians have problems.

But, Ann, you know, I love English.

Ann: That's wonderful...that's why you would make a wonderful candidate for my dissertation because you can express so vividly how..

Sasha: Not enough with my words...

Ann: But I need you at this point because when you're very proficient, there's nothing to study. You're very bright so you have come a long way, even though you're only at Level V. And you can express verbally how you are thinking, which is very difficult for someone who is more reticent than you to express himself in a second language.

Sasha: You know I have lots of problems, in my house, in my family, because of immigration because of not knowing the language. But the further I go I understand that this is something like art. The language is art and you can, learning any language, particularly English, I have had many difficulties. I learned it and I enjoy it.

If people think this is, most people, most of the people who learn English, Polish, Molish, Russians, Chinese, they consider this process as a part, burden, very difficult task. You know, someone, the gods put it on them and said, "This is your Christ and you have to do it. This is what I was thinking, thinking about thinking first month. But maybe I am capable to learn it; not maybe; I am learning it: Thanks God. The articles I enjoy the same way as any words, any beautiful words in English. Then plurals, punctuation, capitalization, speaking correctly I enjoy in the same way. And maybe in some years because of my great ears, thanks God, maybe I will have much much smaller accent than even now. Then I will almost a speaker, a free speaker of English, freely, you call it 'fluent.'

So I will enjoy speaking it as I enjoy speaking in Russian in correct beautiful language.

Understanding Americans, understanding them as speakers of this language, as people who created this language and who still are continuing to create this language. I will understand better this culture, the inside culture of people, what they are. You understand?

Maybe, I don't want to say that I am a god, but maybe I think and consider the fact of my learning English, my need, my necessity to learn English not as a difficult task, as a burden, but as an act of creation, act of creation myself, which I enjoy, an act of re-creation, or making richer. Right?

So, not to understand this fact and to talk about English, as "This is hard." This is different, this is, what for these articles, I have to study those things." This is not the level I would prefer to talk about in studying English.

Ann: And that you should be such an unusual student and candidate.

Sasha: I am not such an unusual student; I am just honest to myself, first of all. I am not being; I am honest to myself, towards to myself because this is the truth. I like it, I enjoy it. The small part that I have, that I own as a language, I am taking advantage of it. And as an English person I appreciate that. OK? Next question?

Ann: Go ahead.

Sasha: #16; "Pronouns are hard for me." Pronouns? Could you...

Ann: Like he, she...

Sasha: Why do I know articles, puncutation and plurals, that whole thing, but I do not know what pronouns is because this was the material we studied in Level I. I didn't know anything, and the teacher somewhere in the corner is talking about pronouns. I knew that "he, she, it" were pronouns, but "we, you, they." I is I, you are you. But now I know the grammar techniques, how they call them, punctuation, connections, semicolons, I know it better, but I do not know the name,'pronoun,' but now I do...

Ann: I know that many Chinese students mix up she, and he.

Sasha: Many Polish students too...

Ann: I know they're very difficult...

Sasha: Never, never. I've learned it and this is the previous, the walked period. We did it; this is that period. It started already. Yep; this is already mine; I own it. I never make that mistake...

Ann: I noticed that you never make that mistake...

Sasha: Thank you...

Ann: In fact some of your sentences are outstanding. What was it? Sasha: I still do not have sugar (in my tea)... Did I put it?

Ann: I think you put it...

Sasha: [#17]; "I have problems with subject/verb agreement." (like what?)

Ann: Like they is, they are....

Sasha: Never: the same thing; I learned it and this is mine.

You see I put this thing; how do you call this thing?

Ann: A bracket...

Sasha: You see I put it since this means the same problem. I will analyze it again...

Sasha: #21; "I have difficulty forming questions." Never; I learned it--that in English you have to change the order and form the question. So ...

Ann: You could help me by saying what is the word order in Russian. Do you have to change the sequence?

Sasha: No, never...You ....

Ann: It's the intonation, right?

Sasha: Right...

Ann: But when you write it, you just put a question mark?

Sasha: The same thing. For example, that's why many people, why I used to, maybe still a little bit, knowing that Americans sometimes do it, not speaking correctly, but speaking...For example, in a very friendly conversation, you do not change the word order, sometimes....you Americans.

But at the beginning, of course I had, ...but now I learned it and I enjoy it. This is like, I don't know, like math or chess...I enjoy putting things in order. I enjoy it. So why not to enjoy these kind of putting things in a particular order?

Ann: So I take it that not only in your oral expression, but in your written expression, you enjoy writing in English...you enjoy it.

Sasha: Yes, yes. Unless there are many words I have to (inaudible)...Uh...this is the same problem..."I have difficulty forming questions....No, no.. in Russian you would say a question for example, "Where were you born?" And the answer, "I was born in Ukraine." The Russian would ask "Where you were born?" with intonation. Where you were born? (Laughs) So you see I cannot ask this question in incorrect way in English. This is kind of hard, so this is mine.

Sasha: #22; "I do not worry about the mechanics of writing in English." I do worry about spelling, because if I do not know the word, I do worry.

Ann: So put down 'spelling.'

Sasha: Spelling. s-p-e-l-l-i-n-g. So you see, I was spelling this word and worrying about spelling.

Sasha: #23; "I write for meaning and eedit [edit] later for spelling and grammar." You know, this is the problem...very good question.

Ann: Because you said this is what you did, so that's why I put it down...

Sasha: It has to do with, you know it answers, partly it answers this question. You answered not this question, but my question, "Why do I have troubles?." "I write for meaning and I edit later"; edit means...?

Ann: Fix...

Sasha: I know this word...edit later for spelling and grammar. This is my...remember once you told me about a cellist who one day realized that he had such ears that he couldn't play or hear, remember? He couldn't hear any mistakes?

Ann: Oh, I remember that article. Right, he was so concerned...

Sasha: So this is the answer; I'm so concerned, right away --here, spelling--- how to spell, that there are difficulties...I'm not so genius, I'm sometimes losing my thoughts, because I am in this dirt, in quotation marks, of grammar, spelling:you understand...

Ann: So, the advice you gave that other student is not always true... that you write and then you fix it later....

Sasha: I knew whom I gave advice...

Ann: So did you write something?

Sasha: No, what should I write? I write for meaning in Russian. This is the perfect way for me, but when I write in English, no never....

So this is the problem...why sometimes, I'm sick. I'm enjoying grammar, I'm enjoying spelling, I'm enjoying material things... the problem why sometimes (I know how to spell this, Judith K.; this is one word...)

Ann: When will you get your essays [Level IV] back? I have to have them....

Sasha: Not yet, I know.....

#23; "The problem why I have difficulties ("f-f-i-c-u-l-t-i-e-s") Ann, this is always...when you know something you enjoy it; when you don't, like you Americans say, you are confused. OK? You understand? (Oh, nice picture!) Once they said in class it was confusing them. Then I said, "If you know something, nothing can confuse you. If you don't, you just... "The problem why I have difficulties"...writing and following my own thoughts...following or in following? You see, this is what I wanted to mention. My new teacher, Bob K., of the first assignments we had to do, this is kind of an improvisation, not a stone exercise--it's something that is written and you put something inside of it and that's it....

Ann: A cloze exercise

Sasha: You have to create: I had to write in English my thoughts...

so in my English, so I wrote...so I wrote too many things, so he put it in parentheses and wrote that what's in parentheses is not, it's OK, but not necessary. So you see, different cultures, different languages....You are more straight in your language, you are very short...Do you understand what I mean?

Ann: Yes, I notice the Polish students...their essays are so long and complicated sentences....and the Hispanics as well...

Sasha: Everyone ...

Ann: You don't know where it's going to end...

Sasha: You know when it's going to end? When we know English well enough to be clear and short.

Ann: What has amazed me, Sasha, was that last fall when you were rehearsing Walter and me and some of the other students, and also this quarter when you were working with the girls, you never have been hesitant to use your English in explaining musical terms and what you wanted from your students. And that always amazed me; that you were quite willing to use the English you had when you are instructing students in their first language. You were able to express what you wanted to say...

Sasha: Oh, not always...

Ann: I know, but you never hesitated...

You used what you knew, and we could supply what you didn't...

But I'm sure that helped you to process, when you tried to use a word to explain something.....

Sasha: Of course,..remember that "Petroushka" with Walter? Explanation, dictionary?

Ann: Yes, you were holding a big Russian-English dictionary trying to explain the music.

Sasha: What else could I do?

Ann: Yes, but I think most students would have hesitated to do that in a second language; but you had the personality for learning a second language.

Sasha: Yah...

Ann: Because it takes courage, it takes an outgoing personality, yah, and you had an eagerness to learn a second language. But I think you were especially adapted to learning a second language because of your personality.

Sasha: Yeah, I have

Ann: You have never hesitated to try to express yourself because of your personality. You have self-confidence about everything, including your ability to learn a second language and to use it. And as you say you own the language...

Sasha: Not all, not the whole, but the part I own, I really own.

Ann: So you know that and are willing to use it. And that always amazed me that you could do that.

Sasha: And you and those girls and Walter and those students, I always open myself to those who want me...this is natural...who want me to be there for them...they appreciate me so I give them part of me...I felt the need, I felt willing to learn something...this is the key to me.

Ann: To learning English?...

Sasha: No, to learn music from me, so I was able to squeeze myself to be there for them.

Sasha: #24; "I prefer to write stories." Which means...?

Ann: As opposed to essays or other forms of writing; to tell a story...to tell about your grandfather. Story...I didn't want to use the word 'narrative' because you might not know what that meant...

Sasha: I know "narration."

Sasha: #25; "I like to write about my own experiences." Uh, not...I prefer to write stories; I don't like to talk about my experiences...not to even talk, since I am close person.

Ann: Private person, like Hillary Clinton

Sasha: Oh, I don't like it unless this is a very good relationship.

Ann: But when they ask you to describe your hometown or that kind of thing...

Sasha: I did it for myself; not for them

Ann: Did that make you uncomfortable; that topic?

Sasha: "Hometown," no.

Ann: What makes you uncomfortable?

Sasha: Talking about me, my experiences...

Ann: Of any kind...

Sasha: I was talking about my grandfather in my composition--that was very good composition, the third part...there is a lot of material there to use, to grade.

Ann: That will be very interesting for me to read...

Sasha: But I was doing it for me; not for Judith Kent. I don't like to write, I like to think, to read--reading. I don't know much to write; I'm not prepared to write....That's why I'm not composing...I don't feel I am prepared for composing. I have to learn more, speak my opinions about things, so I am in the process, OK?

"I would prefer to write a diary." ...I don't feel I am that kind of person...

Sasha: #26; OK, now I am answering these questions...Yah, what I said. Diaries, right?

Ann: It's a question.

Sasha: Is it? "I enjoy writing my reaction to something I have read."

Ann: Like an article.

Sasha: Not writing; just thinking.

Ann: Just talking?

Sasha: Not talking; just thinking·inside me; just thinking.

Ann: They say President Nixon did a lot of thinking by himself; not talking, just thinking.

Sasha: "I often write letters to my friends." Not anymore because this is not correct English because, to begin with 'because')...

Ann: You may begin a sentence with 'because.'

Sasha: Right, in speaking...

Ann: Because I am against abortion, I will protest.

Sasha: Right. "Because I am against abortion, I blah, blah, blah." But here I am just putting an answer; a 'because' clause. "Because I don't have enough time," but this is a kind of joke. The real 'because' is because I like to think, just thinking; I like people. I like and had people who understand me. I like and had people who would understand me, right? Without talking. And, of course, writing. And we used to talk a lot; this is the logical nonsense.
The first I have to feel we are capable of understanding each other without talking, and then I can create when I am in that surrounding, environment. Then I can begin to think, and talk and to write about that. Otherwise I am like a snail inside my own house and, yah, I don't like to talk and writing anything

inside myself. But you were saying about the tape...

Ann: You can communicate and create when you feel the other person or persons are on the same wavelength; that they can understand you...

Sasha: Without any problems. I do not have to prove something; I do not have to prove I'm not a 'camel.' This is a contemporary proverb in Russian; should I prove it? Do you understand? I'm a person, the meaning is. I do not have to prove anything that is obvious.

APPENDIX B

INFORMAL INTERVIEWS ON READING, WRITING AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

10.1

WRITING IN THE CONTEXT OF READING

This is a retrospective interview about Sasha's reading/writing connection taped in July of 1994.

Ann: You said that you were not ready to write; you were still reading. Recently I read an article stating that they don't know the exact connection between reading and writing. Yet it's only logical that the more you read, the better you will write. You might be more inspired to write but at least you have the pattern of what good writing is when you read. I know that I think I write well and I know I read a great deal. And I'm sure that transferred into my writing. For how would you know how to write unless you've read something that someone else had written. So the more you read in English, the easier it will be for you to write in English.

Sasha: And speak ... I was looking for 5 minutes for that word.

Ann: The paradigm that they used in the Language Institute, the audio-lingual, you hear it and repeat it. But the trouble with that paradigm is that it stresses corrections and accuracy both in speaking and writing. So naturally you're more worried about making mistakes when you write...

Sasha: But still I needed to know this...

Ann: But if they would only not stress accuracy, you would be more free to write.

The latest method is not to correct too much; we all have that problem of over-correcting. Then students are afraid to write; they're afraid to make mistakes. It's just like you teaching me music or my trying to learn golf. There are so many things to remember so you become afraid. And, of course, it's all so complicated. And writing is the highest skill...

Sasha: Reading helps...

Ann: Yes, extensive reading should help...

Sasha: Once again...

Ann: I commend you on reading Shostakovich in English. That was a choice of your own so that it's meaningful to you and we are continuing with your vocabulary and comprehension of what you read.

We have argued whether we are both comprehending the same things you have read because we have different backgrounds for our words, different understandings of the words that are used. We have argued about the meaning of "ghetto,"and "superstition."

I'm learning something too...because you as a Russian are used to using a word in a certain way, and we Americans are using the same word in a different way, so it's bound to affect our comprehension.

I told my professor, Dr. P., that I had told Sasha that if he could read this book and read those words as perfectly as he did (he reads far better than many American students), I didn't think he would find any words more difficult than in this book. So now we are doing more reading than writing.

What are you doing (writing) for your teachers?

Sasha: (Laughter); not yet...

Composition topics and levels

Ann: You have not turned in one assignment (Level V)... Dr. P asked me about the compositions you turned in and that I used for my ethnographic study...what level were they? One was "My Hometown."

Sasha: Level III, no Level II...

Ann: Level II? I said Level III; excellent... How about "My Trip to Israel?" It sounds like an assigned topic; also "My Hometown."

Sasha: Uh, huh, Level III.

Ann: For Judith K.; "My Grandfather;" was that assigned?

Sasha: The topic was "The most important person in my life."

Ann: So that's different than "The most influential person?"

Sasha: That's Level V...

Ann: "Steps to writing" (Level IV); was that assigned?

Sasha: No, those were "how to do anything, something."

Ann: The third one was "The most important decision in my life."

Sasha: That was the stupidest one...

Ann: I sent that to Judith and she returned it with comments...

Her comment was (I had thought she said you didn't have time to revise it, and you had so much time to get it in, and you did it and it was fine.) But she wrote that you didn't like it...was it because you didn't have time to correct it?

Sasha: No, because of the topic. This is a very stupid topic. We cannot look, tell, how important our decisions are or are not--it's too soon...in 70 years when I write my testimony or "memorize" maybe I will consider some days of this period...

Ann: OK, Mr. K. has assigned you three topics. One is "Most influential person"...

Sasha: And two others; whichever I want...

Ann: Did he give you some suggestions for the other two?

Sasha: Not yet...we will talk about it as soon as I finish first (one)...

Ann: (laughter) Anyway, Aug. 9 is not too far away for you to fulfill your contract to finish your three compositions for Level V. Have you given any thought at all about possible topics? We shall do them here!

Sasha: No, no...

Ann: Why not? This was my original intent...that I would observe you as you are writing, and you would verbalize your thoughts as you are writing...and that would be a nice experiment...at least with one of them...

10.2

THE 1994 AWARDS CEREMONY

This is a "Think-Aloud" as Sasha wrote a Testimonial Letter for the CAD Awards Ceremony in June of 1994. He had been working as a music tutor for the CAD for three quarters beginning in the Fall of 1994.

Sasha: "Student testimonial of personal growth."
Testimonial means...from 'test'?

Ann: Not from test--'attest'--I attest...

Sasha: So what should I say?

Ann: Do you feel you have grown from the tutoring process? I know you've had a lot of experience teaching....

Sasha: Yah, I've grown...I got to know English while preparing my sessions and even working in class. I got to know American music terms, right?, terminology and improved my English...

Ann: Are you going to write those down?

Sasha: Right, but it doesn't mean I didn't know the terminology...that meant that I didn't know their pronunciation in English. During tutoring period (sessions), I, comma, got to know a lot of...how they look in English...erasing...I got to know how to pronounce, yah, right?

Ann: (pronoun)'ce' instead of 's'--same sound

Sasha: (expletive...erasing) to pronounce musical terminology (right?) in English. I also improved my English generally speaking--I also generally improved...I also improved my English generally...since I had to explain many things the students wasn't able or didn't understand. Transferring, how do you call it...dividing the word. Preparing ,ah p-r-e-p-e-a-

Ann: No 'e' there--it sounds like 'pear'

Sasha: (erasing) Preparing the Fall Recital 'tal'?, not 'tle'...Chicago campus I was forced to or I had to learn them many songs with the students I tutor and had to learn and with students...

Ann: What type of songs?

Sasha: explaining the connection (yeh?) between the words (right?) and musical material.

Ann: material?

Sasha: Understand what I mean? Material meaning melody, with the whole thing. Connections, explaining...to help us to understand the words. Underlining by musical...between the words and the music. Then (what else?)...this explaining

Ann: This is good, just how you benefitted...

Sasha: I had to learn many songs with students explaining the connections between the words and music--

explaining the mood of the music, of the piece --pe

Ann: p-i-e, like 'pie'

Sasha: ...and the way it should be performed, performed. That's all; that's not all but that's enough.

Sasha: "Volunteer work at the university is the way I got the job as a music tutor." Ah, that was this..."Hobbies; my hobbies....are (erasing) always have to do with my future. No matter how narrow-minded it, I might seem (right?) I prefer um..I always...I prefer to always improve my knowledge and skills (this is the same thing) in music (yah, correct?) by by (erasing) listening, playing it (erasing), and reading about the subject (of music) nc simply the subject.

I found once (yah?) Once I found myself in music and I feel and (erasing) since then (yah? then, en) comma, I feel the need (yah?)(erasing) to (erasing) do everything (yah?) to reach my aims or goals. Right, that's all...

Once I found myself in music and I feel the need to do everything to want my aims out. Do you say like this?

Ann: To reach my goal

Sasha: Goals, I have goals, right?

Ann: Let me read it

Sasha: I did it...

Ann: I don't want to say anything...Snow, snow...

Sasha: I didn't want to say anything so I said this...

Contrastive Analysis

In December of 1994, Sasha was reading aloud from a letter written in English by one of my former Russian instructors from St. Petersburg. As he did so, he analyzed her mistakes as he attempted to help me understand the problems of negative transfer when a reader is learning a second language.

Lena was now teaching in South Korea and her letter describes both her travails and joys.

Sasha: Is it in English? Looks like nonsense. OK, this is the letter from Anna Kim's friend in Korea who is teaching Russian; she's from Russia. Her name is Elena. The reason I'm putting my voice on this letter on tape . I'm willing to read this letter, this valuable piece of paper, text, since this person who wrote it is my (how do you say it?) country (mun?) man.

So she has the same, might have, the same problems with English (she's writing in English by the way) don't understand that Ann writes in Russian so fluently that she receives letters written in Russian...NO!... this is in English.

We will talk and see what kind of English, what kinds of mistakes, if there are any...but I know there are. Why me? Because I am a Russian...and again, I might be able to understand some difficulties with English, some mistakes, and what's the most valuable. I can explain the, the nature of them to Ann...because I'm walking the same way...in learning the language...So, let's begin...

"Dear Ann,

Sorry, I have no letters from you long time." This is very very vivid...bright example of how Russians write.

This is mostly said in Russian by using English words. I understand perfectly well, the woman, she's in Korea, she speaks Russian, and English is not her major, so this is a lot.

So much of English; it's not seeing; it's obvious she's not used to using the language. First of all, she doesn't know how to do it, so....

"Sorry, I've no letters from you long time." You see, I can't read it. She meant, she is being sorry for the fact that she hadn't had any letters, or had no letters from Anna, from you, for a long time. Right?

So, "sorry" is not to Ann about Ann's not writing letters, but sorry about her not having received any letters from Ann for a long time. She's feeling sorry that you are not feeling so friendly, maybe...

"I haven't had any letters from You (capital Y) for a long time." This is right. "I came to Korea from Russia in the, January end"...I would say the real Russians would say in the end of January. But, at the end of January. Or she could say I came here..at the end of January.

"I've been at home, in St. Petersburg" (comma) because it's added information, it's not important in this case. "Home," and she points that her home is in St. Petersburg.

Ann: But she left out the commas; is that true in Russia that you leave out the commas around parenthetical phrases?

Sasha: "I have been doma (home), Petersburg." You know, if she had home somewhere else...not only in St. P., we would say 'which one?'; this would be very important, but since she doesn't have another home, but this particular home, she just wanted you to remember, to understand...

You know, I know English grammar better than Russian, so I think, not always

"I've been at home"...She's not at home now, and she hasn't been recently...right? She had been, she's in Korea now while writing letter. So, she didn't know that she had to use past perfect...

Ann: Or you could say "I was..."

Sasha: Right! Very good, Ann...
This is, by that time, that was over, a finished action, so she could use "I was..at home" Why didn't she put 'for' over one and a half months? In Russian, we do not use 'for.' We do not have a preposition. We just say, "She were doing that." She have been doing that. Almost we never say it in Russian. So the woman is thinking in Russian while she is writing in English.

In 'month' we do not use plurals because we have a different thing. We put the word 'month' a different ending, suffix, depending on the situation...For plurals, many different endings...

"It was dark and cold winter."

Ann: You don't have articles; "A dark..."

Sasha: Shouldn't we put "the winter"? No... What did she mean by 'dark?'

Ann: Cloudy; St. Petersburg has about five days of sun a year...

Sasha: Right, My Ukrainian relatives write 'dark' since there is no light in the streets, since there is no energy, electricity...

"There is very complex situation"--A situation--'complex' means difficult situation "in Russia until now."

"Prices are growing, money are (very good). We do not say money is because money is plural. We do not have the word 'money' in singular. If someone uses 'money' in singular in Russian, this is very old Russian.

Ann: ESL students would have trouble with plurals in money.

Sasha: I have trouble with plurals, money...'Money is,' when 'money are' in Russian...I try not to think about it, just speak it...Money are inflating..." instead of money is...

Ann: The economy is undergoing inflation, not inflating...

Sasha: There's been strong inflation...money are getting cheaper, money is... "I can't understand anything."

Ann: You use double negatives in Russia, so she remembered to change it...

Sasha: Right, anything...We would say "I can't understand nothing."

"My family is OK, my grandson is lovely." But handsome is stronger...beautiful. "He looked at me with a great interest, but keeped a distance from me."

Ann: kept...she doesn't need the article...

Sasha: She looked how...this is the wrong order...

"My time in Russia gone very fast,"...gone, gone, was gone or went..,"because"...this is very good Russian...in Russian and Polish, comma comes before' because'..."I had a lot of problems there. After my arrival here, in Korea, I had a lot of problems here, too. Even there were a lot of mice (mouse) in our apt. and I spent some sleepless nights." Oh, my goodness...

Ann: I was surprised...in Russia, yes, but Korea...

Sasha: Mices, mice?
She didn't know how to spell it so put 'mouse' in parentheses.

"Now, it is spring in Korea. Most part of trees are in blossom --white, pink, yellow, red. "Sakura (cherry trees) are beautiful, magnolia and other flowers I don't know.

Ann: are in bloom would be better...

Sasha: "pink, yellow, red, Sakura trees are beautiful..." Magnolia and other flowers I don't know." She doesn't know if magnolias are beautiful.

Ann: She doesn't know the names of other flowers

Sasha: "Now, I'm thinking of my summer vacations, because my semestr will be finished in the middle of June. I would like to come to Russia in my vacations time."

Ann: We usually say 'by the middle of June."

Sasha: Right, by the middle of June...(future; we'll be finished).

"I would like to come to Russia in (on, during) my vacation(s) time. But now, it is very difficult to buy a ticket to Russia. See prepositions are difficult...But now..'but' at the beginning of a sentence...

Ann: Sometimes it's OK.

Sasha: Only for unformal...

Ann: This is informal.....

Sasha:"But now"...however, now ...

"In any case, I'll try to go to Russia for two months."

She'll try for two months or go for two months?

Ann: Spend...

Sasha: Go for two months...including traveling time?... "But now you write me in Korea." Write to me to Korea?...

Ann: In Korea...

Sasha: "I'm very interested in your life." Very good sentence.

Ann: Are you serious?

Sasha: Right, in grammar. Is there something wrong with it? You wouldn't say it in English? She means she cares about your life.

10.4

Critique of Recommendation Letter

It is Aug. 25 [1994] and Sasha is critiquing his letter of endorsement for tenure which he has written to the Committee on Tenure and Promotion. He is reading it aloud and revising it. One can note the probable influence of his musical background as Sasha beats out the rhythm of his words and the cadence of his utterances.

Sasha: OK; "Over the course of the year while I served as an SI Leader, Ms. Kim was my constant supervisor and invaluable mentor. Because of the length of time over which our association took place and account of its quality, I am honored by the opportunity to strongly recommend Anna Kim for promotion and tenure.

Coming from another country, I was encountering many problems when I first met Ms. Kim. For one thing, until that time, I hadn't had a job in the United States. Now, in addition to getting one, the chance to work in the area of music was given to me. For another matter"--oh, so--so many stops! You know, red lights....Look at this..."For one thing,(slaps hands) until that time (slaps hands again) I hadn't had a job in the United States (slaps hands). Now, (slaps hands) in addition to getting one (slaps hands), the chance to work in the area of music was given me (slaps hands). For another matter (slaps hands)" You see, this is not...

Ann: Laughing...You don't like the meter....

Sasha: I writ it; this is the only stop, right. Whatever you call it; meter, melody...

Ann: I'm just comparing it to music.

Sasha: You see, I don't like it...

Ann: You don't like it because it doesn't flow...is that it?

Sasha: Absolutely...

Ann: The phrasing...

Sasha: Absolutely..."Now in addition to getting one, the chance to work in the area of music was given to me. For another matter.." We have good material here; we just have to connect it.

Ann: Yes, that's the whole secret...

Sasha: "For another matter I had an excellent opportunity to practice and improve my English skills, especially in the field of my expertise."

Ann: You like that...

Sasha: Yes, no, you see, sentences by themselves except for the first, maybe, "I hadn't had a job"--I never had a job--

Ann: And also...

Sasha: I never had a job

Ann: Do you want a pen?

Sasha: Whatever....

Ann: OK, one more minute and we have to go...

Sasha: "I have never, ". yah?..never... you see, I have to feel it..

Ann: OK.

Sasha: "I have never had a job in the United States...in the USA, in the United States. Now in addition to getting one, the chance" ... You see, these things..."For one thing...now, for another thing...such a turn of events"....I will look up these things in the Russian dictionary... "circumstances was certainly a significant occurence in my new life, and all of it was made possible under Ms. Kim's supervision."

Now, we decided to put these ...it's not that bad...but from fresh look , I didn't like it.

Ann: I know, but tomorrow when you look at it; it's too close to when you wrote it...

Sasha: What I wanted to say...this one...yah...."My acquaintance with such a person was offered as if a gift of the gods" (braaack)....oh, no..."A gods, a gods...acquaintance, acquaintance.. with" you see, I'm not talking..."such a person was offered as if a gift of the gods." No, we decided to put it at the very end...right...like a final chord, in a symphony...a masterpiece...what you call it...yah, good final chord.

And therefore I recommend it highly, the highestly [sic]. Can you say that?

Ann: Laughing...no, to the highest extent...

Sasha: OK, let's look at this tomorrow. I mean I'll look at it later today, but tomorrow....

10.5

OBSERVATIONS DURING TRUMAN COLLEGE COMPOSITIONS

I made some observations on Sasha's writing process as he composed "Vietnam" for his Truman College class in October of 1994.

Background

Sasha has been assigned to write a composition for his Truman College course in reading and writing in a second language comparable to NLU's Communication Development courses after Level V of the Language Institute.

Vietnam

About a month ago, a film strip of a Vietnamese youth stealing some fruit was shown to the class. This was to be used either as an introduction to a novel, a play or other type of discourse. Although this appeared to be a difficult task for beginning English writers from a different culture and language, Sasha was able to compose a short descriptive narrative while I was observing him. Sasha's focus seemed to have been to produce an action story and this was the first chapter to a book.

He began by writing the first paragraph initially in Russian. Once he sat before my computer today, he had to translate his sentences into English. The word order was very convoluted, as can be seen in the first versions of this composition. Eventually, we were able to switch some of the phrases so that the meanings intended could be clearer for a reader of English.

10.5.1

TRUMAN COLLEGE INTERVIEW

This interview with Sasha was conducted in December of 1994 and involved his experiences at Truman College. A comparison with the instructional program at the Language Institute is also made.

Background

Sasha had expressed fears that he was not doing well in his Truman College Reading/Writing course. He is 'feeling stupid' because he cannot produce an essay in the time limits of a class period. His teacher is not aware of his particular learning style.

It appears that most of the other ESL students in his class are also having trouble with the assignments. For one thing, they have not learned connecting words, although Sasha has. They are simply told to use three connecting words in an essay after having been shown a brief film clip. This time it was from "Indecent Proposal." They had to choose one of five topics, each of which had several specific questions which had to be addressed.

I confessed to Sasha that even I had not understood the assignment he had had two weeks previously. A film strip was shown of two people in bed discussing a dream that one of them had had over several nights. The class was to summarize the scene and then expand on it. This class sounds more like an advanced Creative Writing course.

This teacher does not have an ESL background; she is simply an English teacher. However, she may not be aware of recent trends in writing instruction. She is telling the class that they must learn to write quickly on many topics without having to revise their products. To her, that is the essence of writing.

She also uses a grid for evaluating her students' compositions. She has indicated that Sasha does not organize his material well given the time frame allowed. However, when he takes his work home and has time to plan, she indicates that his organization is good. She also complains that he is not writing in a linear English style; a goal that is no longer being stressed with ESL writers. However, when time is limited Sasha tends to write first in Russian.

Sasha is now lamenting that the farther he goes in learning English, the worse he seems to be doing. At this rate, he fears he may be given a grade of 'D." This would be a real blow to someone as focussed on grades as is Sasha. He feels he may not have been ready to take this course. He has not had the exposure nor had the chance to acquire the necessary vocabulary to write quickly in English.

10.5.2

Brownsville

A descriptive composition was another assignment that Sasha completed at Truman College.

Ann: This is January 7 [1995]; I'm interviewing Sasha about the course he just completed at Truman College. It is comparable to NLU's Communication Development course which follows Level V of the Language Institute. Part I is Reading 126; Part II is Communication Development or writing. It met twice a week; an hour and twenty minutes of each.

We're talking about some stimulus pictures his instructor gave Sasha before Composition V. These were a series of eight drawings of different years. They were to observe details...

Sasha:... of the same willage [negative transfer] and repeating the passive voice. I am done, it has been done, it was done, it will be done in five minutes. Ed or the irregular form of the verb to be.

I did it, it is done. Supposedly we were to use this formula a lot in this composition which is kind of appropriate for describing what happened to this village through the course of some years.

Ann: But you had made a comment earlier about something being stupid and I want you to say why you said it.

The role of grammar

Sasha: I tried to...many people did not know this grammar from the previous levels; she did not stand there and teach this pattern--were done--

Ann: She did not give you any model sentences?

Sasha: No, maybe she said, "We will be working on the passive voice." And she did not teach it; that's not her job. She is not an ESL teacher; she's an English teacher. That's the difference. I don't think she did not know that; no, she did, but she really could not explain it as well as the ESL teachers had done at National.

Actually she had told us that teaching grammar was not the point of her as teacher in Level VI; we were supposed to come with enough grammar knowledge for this course from the previous courses. It was stupid because people are not prepared in Levels I through V with grammar as they did [at National]. For example, I think my grammar, what I possess in my head was enough; she thought it was enough because I did not have any problems with grammar in writing. Surely it helped in reading with my comprehension.

It was stupid because she said we would repeat the passive voice pattern, but the people did not know it and they would have to repeat it.. what they hadn't learned.

Ann: *She didn't ask how many knew...*

Sasha: Actually, she did the right thing. Almost everyone would say that we do not know it, know it quite well or well enough

Ann: So why do you say she did the right thing?

Sasha: Not asking the question who knew, who didn't know...that wasn't her job.

Ann: But she wanted them to produce that without finding out their prior knowledge.

Sasha: That's right...

Ann: So that's smart?

Sasha: So why don't they go to the level where they should be taught this material?

Ann: OK, have you any idea from the fact that your classmates did not know the grammar you learned in the Language Institute and presuming they all finished Levels I through V at Truman College that you can make some sort of comparison on the instruction they had received?

Sasha: I see my parents who are in Levels IV and III; I see very well how they are being taught. A general comparison I can give is a very big difference in seriousness; how to teach the course and even though all those teachers are somehow related to this ESL program; I do not think they are as good as many, I wouldn't say all, National teachers.

Ann: So even though you say Russian students are not coming to National because they don't want to pay, whereas at Truman they don't have to pay, would you say it was worth it to you?

Sasha: Yep, that's why I stayed there. That's why I did pay whatever I had to pay.

Ann: So you feel you had a good foundation...

Sasha: I would recommend; I think the ESL program, the Language Institute is a very strong school, very good school. From what I've seen in the last two years, it's the best what I've seen in Chicago for ESL. I'm not talking about anything else because I don't know.

Ann: Right, that's all you've taken here. Another question I have for you...

Sasha: There are some disadvantages too...and could be better at National like the problem that no one works on pronunciation in the language lab. The program might have been good, but the teachers weren't prepared, do not care enough, or do not know what to do about pronunciation. Also, I was bored. That means it didn't help me with my pronunciation. Everything I have is from what I heard; I don't think I heard a lot of things at school in that lab; the same thing has been told by my classmates.

Sometimes they double the program what's been told in the Language Institute--they repeat those patterns.

Ann: Like drills...do they say a sentence and you have to repeat it?

Sasha: Right; we have to listen to some texts and read them at the same time. Sometimes we read and taped them and listened to them. It was always so quickly; let's do this or that.

Ann: And does someone evaluate them after you have done your reading?

Sasha: Yah, we needed to on the very last day of a quarter we had to, many things were said on the tape. We had to listen to them and write...

Ann: Like dictation?

Sasha: Like dictation, like spelling test...We were given two words, for example: chip and cheap...very easy...which one am I saying...we had to mark this one or that one...very easy. The point is that many of those things we surely learned...in a way it helped, but I wouldn't give all the credit for our listening comprehension and pronunication to that Language Lab. Ninety-nine percent of what we had is from the streets, from our listening to TV, from our conversing to other people, our mates, at work, not from the lab.

Ann: OK. This goes along with some of the books I read over the Christmas break. Steven Krashen has a theory about second language acquisition; he feels you acquire a second language like you acquire a first language in a naturalistic fashion.

Sasha: That's right.

Ann: Not from actual teaching. Some people may need the teaching if they can't get it outside, say they only speak one language at home. They may need direct instruction, but the best way is from your surroundings.

Sasha: Surely they prepared us somehow for those tests. You see we could peek (pick) one of the two...so that's kind of an improvement. That was strictly theoretically done; " OK guys, this is chip and the sound is ch-i-p, ih, ih." It was shown, especially with Ana K.; she was very good in teaching that lab. "And this is cheap." And she was

Ann: She exaggerated the sound...

Sasha: Very nice, very nice. But that was still very dry. We had to have millions of examples of those cheap or chip...how to read 'oa' or 'ou', you see...

Ann: When she demonstrated chip or cheap, was it in context, some meaningful situation?

Sasha: Sometimes, most of the time, no. Those were simply words out of context. This is not how people learn things. There was no development. I did not see no point; the point was to show us the difference, but some people could not hear the difference.

Ann: So what happened to them?

Sasha: They cannot produce; they cannot reproduce the difference.

Ann: And so nobody checked to see if they could hear or reproduce...

Sasha: They tried to check, but I think the background voice was saying to those teachers, they were told by someone that they could not teach pronunciation so they did not bother.

Ann: But when you are evaluating composition #5 and your teacher [at Truman] said you had to use passive tense, was this what they did in the Language Institute?

Sasha: No, this is what I didn't like (at Truman). (At National) we had to write for a couple of, but not a lot. Usually it was in a book; there were enough exercises there but yah in class too. We had to, J. K., she asked us to use certain forms, not in a composition, but in a small composition.

Ann: When you were critiquing your very first composition in the United States and you had just learned present tense and you used those words.

Sasha: That was the only thing I had learned... The classes were nice, but they could be much better, much better.

Ann: What intrigues me on your critique of this composition is why she was concentrating on one verb form when she's not an ESL teacher?

Sasha: I guess she had to repeat them. Her department told her that they usually don't know these patterns, so at least repeat them and maybe 80% did not know them.

Ann: So how did she evaluate them?

Sasha: She marked them "wrong."

Ann: So then did they learn them? From their errors?

Sasha: I don't know. I've been learning them for two or three months; I was prepared.

Ann: What did they learn if they did not know that particular verb form?

Sasha: The point of the class was to show us some types of introduction and how this formula, main point and its development, suppport is pursued in writing.

Ann: But then also to incorporate these verb forms in the process; that's a lot of things to do...

Sasha: That's what I'm saying...

10.6

THE WRITING PROCESS

This is a retrospective oral interview on the writing process conducted in January of 1995 of Sasha's first compositions in English at National-Louis University.

Ann: Today is June 22 [1995]; I'm interviewing my informant about his [first] composition, " My Classmate."

Sasha: We are looking at my first composition in America in English.

Ann: Do you know the approximate date?

Sasha: Uh, the middle, Apr. 7 (1993). Oh, my goodness; The third day of my study in English--Lev. I.

Ann: The third day; Level I; You're kidding...

Sasha: "Composition about my classmate." I was learning about the other root of this word; class is one and mate is the other.

The biggest mistake I made was that by that time, I hadn't got used to these, I hadn't got used to margins, so I was writing the whole paper up and this.

Punctuation

This is what my Level I teacher had trouble...with me. I put...how do you call this sign? Three, three...

Ann: Spaces? Do you do this same thing in Russia; use three dots at the beginning of something?

Sasha: Two, yes. We put... I, I...at that time I was already trying to be creative in English; Not to say "today is...blah, blah, blah, I am going to ..blah, blah, blah. I wanted to bring the reader into that situation. And I put dots at the very beginning. I was using these three dots at the very beginning like we do in Russia.

And I'm writing..."Today is Wednesday, it's April 7."

You see, I still didn't know you write...

Ann: In Russia do you write to the very edge of the paper?

Sasha: No, but I didn't know it was important...

Ann: It isn't very important...

Verb tenses

Sasha: "It was raining and cold..."

You know the first sentence in present continuous was..."It was raining, the sun is shining..."

I didn't quite understand, right?... what is "it"...The weather is raining...

In Russian we would say, "Rain goes, rain is raining, Like this, yah?

Ann: You say "rain is coming down?"

Sasha: Yah...

Ann: "Rain is falling"...

Sasha: We say "rain is going",,,walking, walking (ha,ha)
So this is, as I remember very vividly, I had problems with "It is raining"....not a strong subject..."It" is a strong subject; I'm getting mixed up with "There is, there are."
Anyway, "It is raining and cool"; I'm putting together present continuous and an adjective...
Comma, "but I must go to the university"...
Now I wouldn't say 'must'; I would say 'have to.'; I would say not so strong, but at that time I was working with a dictionary, so I was just picking up what I heard in class (this was only my third day in class) and putting it in some kind of order...
"But I must to go to the university, because

Ann: You've got a comma in there...

Sasha: You see, she didn't correct it...

Ann: Is there a comma there?

Sasha: Yah, in Russia we put a comma before 'because', but here I didn't know...
And she didn't bother because lots of things to do before omitting commas...
"because I need to study English." Very very childish explanation, but

Ann: What is all this...NLU...?

Sasha: Then, I'm putting "Michigan Ave., bldg. #18, third floor...and "over one minute I am in the classroom"....Meaning 'in one minute'...You understand this?...

Ann: Are you sure you aren't erasing anything? "This is my teacher, Judith"...How could it be; a different Judith?

The urge to be creative

Sasha: Yah, what I wanted to do; this is kind of poetry; I wanted to write poetically...right away. I was trying to show my way to the university...by these pieces...I knew they are not sentences, but this is the way we do it in Russia.

"Michigan Ave.,building no. 18." I'm doing commentary; I'm commentarying...I'm commenting while I'm coming closer to the building...

Closer to the point, the aim of, that classroom...

OK, here we are..."Third floor"

So for the reader to feel the third floor;

I didn't write, I didn't put, and again she didn't bother to correct because it's a lot to correct for the first time...

The reader comes with me, goes with me, "and over one minute (I mean "in one minute") I am in the classroom.

Now I'm in the classroom, I'm walking in, I see my teacher, Judith, I see my classmates, and "sit on the chair at the desk."

I was desperately studying these prepositions: on the chair, at the desk, on the chair... She didn't like this, or she didn't understand this...She corrected me in this way...to follow the rules of English way of setting the sentence...SVC, Subject, verb complement...

Corrections by teacher:

NLU is on Mich. Ave. The address is... My classroom is....

Sasha: You see, she broke the whole idea...anyway. She wanted me to know, to be sure that I know, that I'm beginning to learn the order of an American sentence. In Russian, though, we can say such things; Michigan Ave., third floor, parts, moods. In Russian we can even say, "Cool." This is one sentence...in very good poetry.

Anyway, "I see my teacher, Judith." Of course, I couldn't use anything but what we had begun to study at that time...simple present tense.

So my teacher tells me...I put "offered"...but my teacher tells me "suggested"...but at that time you see I didn't know the difference between "suggests" and "offers"...everything was like in a fog.

"to talk with my classmate from China." So finally I wrote the name of his country. "It is a pleasure to meet him." What I wrote was "I am pleasure to meet him." Which is ...

Ann: We say "I am happy to meet you."

Sasha: Or "I was pleased..." What I wanted to say was "I was pleased..." but I didn't know. Now I want to say "It's a pleasure to meet you." It's a construction inside me that I will never lose because it's already mine. But at that time, I didn't know, "I am pleased," different kinds of adjectives with 'ed' at the end. So now I'm beginning...

Ann: Beginning?

Sasha: Yep...."It is a pleasure to meet him." Now I am beginning; that was the introduction. But she was happy, I'm sure. And I should have been happy at that time to write something. What Judith K. was saying..."He has problems, but he must write something." And they wouldn't be concerned about what I'm writing. How philosophical it is, or what. Just talk, talk on the paper.

So that time I was very young...one year ago...so I was beginning. Now, new sentence....

Ann: So you are saying that because you were just beginning you did not have a writer's block. You were anxious to write, to express yourself.

Sasha: Ah, I was younger...(snicker)

Ann: No, I think it was the result of the training you went through, the constant corrections...it maybe inhibited your writing....

Sasha: No, maybe, but I grew up that year...

Ann: What do you mean "I grew up?"

Sasha: Now, if I were to learn another language, I wouldn't write...The possibilities in that language would be very restricted, but I wouldn't be writing stuff like this...my teacher tells me to talk to my classmate. This is very childish...I remember those days...Yah, The more I learn, the more complicated...not complicated, the more I grew up, the more I want to be myself in writing.

Ann: You don't have your style yet; it takes many years to develop your style...

Sasha: Even though it might seem my style, but of course I don't have my style yet...
But here is another problem, also not knowing another language. So it goes parallel.

Ann: So you had to speak with this classmate? And write down a description?

Sasha: Which I did by sitting next to him. I had to sit a long time near him and I talked to him. Oh I remember those ....

Ann: Was it enjoyable? It must have been difficult...

Sasha: Very, of course. I couldn't understand him...I was very angry...

I couldn't understand him...He said something "um, um, um", you know, Chinese, and she understood him, the teacher...Any kinds of sounds she could put into words. But I don't know the language; I do not have any listening comprehension experience. I remember at one point I thought..."This is not important. I will write anything I want to write about him...who would check?"

Ann: So this is a novel?

Sasha: "My classmate is from China. His name is Chung....He is Chinese." This is a big movement forward. I saw the difference between China and Chinese. "The name of his city in China was ? Kai Pan. It's a small citi"--this is a mistake. In Russian it's a perfect word." " He goes to U.S." Who knew 'the'?

This is wrong--he came to U.S. "He, as I, lives in Chicago." This is how we write in Russian.

"He is married and his wife lives in a house with him." Very good progress...I am not dropping 's' at the end of third person tense. "They don't have any children." which I couldn't understand...quite..."My classmate is 36 years old." I put them pretty close so that the reader could question himself.

"His language is Chinese, but he need..." (no 's') at the same time this is creativeness and learning...I'm using the words "to speak" English. "And he study it at NLU. He comes to school by car (OK?). His classroom is on the third floor." There's nothing I could say..."and his teacher is my teacher. She dos'nt [sic] speak China (or Russia). But she very good speaks English; she's American." Corrections: She (teacher) said she speaks very good English or speaks English very well.

Sasha: Good English or speaks English very well...She puts herself very high...."It is very important for us" (meaning the students that she speaks good English). "But my classmate dos'nt have any brothers or sisters. He is an only one child.' I would say the only one child...

Ann: An only child

Sasha: I am the only...

Ann: No brothers or sisters...

Sasha: He is the only child. (I could say this?) I heard this expression, but I didn't remember for sure... "He likes oranges." By the way, we're learning the names of different kinds of fruit. "His favorite color is white. Maybe, his car is white. I don't know, but I think so (laughter)."

Ann: But I imagine so...

Sasha: Yah, but Level I....

Ann: But it's good...

Sasha: So..."He is very very interesting man." Right...but I didn't put 'a' very interesting man...

Ann: But why 'interesting?'

Sasha: He wasn't....

My Monday's Schedule

Ann: Why only Monday? Did she assign only Monday's?

Sasha: We were studying present tense...I live, she lives... "I get up at 6:30 in the morning. It's very difficult for me, because it is a first day of the week. But I know English 'waits' for me." Mistake--I put quotation marks down, not up. (as in Russian)...She [instructor] didn't say anything... What I wanted to say was "English is waiting for me...every day. "...the English language waits for me."

I put quotation marks around 'waiting' because it's not waiting me outside the doorway...

Ann: You wanted to accent it; maybe single quotation marks would have been better...

Sasha: Yah, but I didn't know... now I know. "I go..." We double it all the time..."I go to the bathroom and take a shower, brush my teeth, brush and comb my hair." (I never brush my hair; I just comb my hair. How can people brush their hair? What's the difference between brush and comb?)

I didn't know you brush your teeth and brush your hair.

Ann: Same motion

Sasha: "Then, I always have breakfast. My mother and my grandmother..." (I put two choices.)

Ann: Or, you could put them side by side...

Sasha: I didn't know that..."My grandmother make it"; I'm saying both my mother and grandmother make... for me in the kitchen."

"Then I always have breakfast, who my mother or my grandmother makes for me." I thought 'who' was the same as 'which or that.'

I should have written, "Then I always have breakfast which my mother or grandmother makes for me in the kitchen."

But I wrote 'who', and she [instructor] didn't understand...She simplified it..."My mother makes it for me in the kitchen."

Ann: Very good sentence for a second composition

Sasha: "I never wash (the) dishes after breakfast"...no time for that..."but I usually iron my shirt. I leave for school at 7:25 and come there in my friend's car. She usually drive me to school. I go straight to the third floor and begin my English class at 8:30. I'm in class from 8:30 to 12:30. I study very hard and for twenty or thirty minutes between the first and second part of class. We work very hard and usually need a break..." (Again) 'who' I have for twenty or thirty minutes. Which, that, who...no difference at that time...

"In the second part of class, I usually have some tests, so my break is very important to me. (I didn't know what to talk about.) "Mrs. Judith"...just like 'Mrs. Ann'....I had 'Ms.'...I didn't know the difference between Miss, Mrs....

Ann: Ms. covers everything...

Sasha: But no last name; very stupid..."Ms. Judith, my teacher (noun clause; very good), is a very kind, patient" (these are the only adjectives I knew), ..."and young woman." And she put here,("hah, hah") because she was 63.

Ann: Flatterer...You did that deliberately...

Sasha: Of course (chortling)... When I walked in very late the first day, I saw number 54 on the board and I asked, "What's that?" And she answered, "I am ..., but you do not ask in America such questions. But she did enter the class by saying, "I am your teacher...and I am.... She did this to confuse us with her looks and...

"After I finish my English class, I usually go to a music shop." What I put here was "after finish my English class" which meant 'after finishing'...I didn't know the "ing" form I was supposed to ..."I like to look at the many different kind of CDs and cassettes with classical music. I like to look at (the) many different kinds of CDs" (should I put an apostrophe?) Should I put 'the'?

"I remember a lot of music when I look at them and (why didn't I put 'enjoy') and enjoy it." At 12:30 I always go home in my friend's car. My grandmother always wait for me with lunch."

I haven't been always perfect with tenses; it takes time....

Ann: Of course...

Sasha: "Usually," you see, I did it..."for 25 minutes I have a rest." Right? I sleep after lunch...I didn't work; I slept. I have a rest, right? "I take a rest (a nap), then I get up and begin to do my homework, I start doing my homework." whatever..."I usually have a little dinner after who, that, which, at 9 o'clock, I always go for walk to the street."

Ann: She [instructor] put 'in' the street...

Sasha: Tell me, where am I going now...to the street?

Ann: Going outside for a walk; you never say "to the street." You're going for a walk...

Sasha: You never say "I'm going to the street?" Imagine; a 19 year old boy saying; "At 9:40 I go to the bathroom and take a shower and at 10:15 I go to bed. " What I want you to notice--90% of the sentences begin with when I do it; adverb clause of time...then, when, usually....

Ann: That's what she expected; your schedule

Sasha: The idea of American English... I go to bed at (when).

Ann: So you're starting off with 'when.'

Sasha: When and who does (adverb clause)

Ann: You have this inclination to be literary rather than just plain descriptive...

10.7

ERROR ANALYSIS OF COMPOSITIONS BY CASE STUDY SUBJECT

I thought it would be interesting for Sasha to analyze his own compositions for errors from a perspective when he more fully understood English grammar. He did so in April of 1995.

Level I

1. My Classmate

Sasha: The risk was low so sentences were short. No creativity was involved. I was to get information about my classmate and use simple present and present continuous.

There was no technical work involved; it was like an exercise to get us interested. It was a compromise between compositions and dry exercises.

Ann: How were your partners chosen?

Sasha: Partners were assigned. The instructor tried to integrate the different languages. I had difficulty interviewing him because the correct English sounds were not made. I have enough difficulty understanding correct English--I asked questions and *for the sake of exactness*, paraphrased the questions. When I received a different answer each time, I decided to make up the information. The point of the exercise was the *correctness of the grammar.*

There were easy topics in all of Level I. This is a good and proper method of teaching, since *one is not burdened with the necessity of thinking while writing; so one can concentrate on the correct grammar.*

2. Monday's Schedule

Sasha: I wrote this composition for the second time, since I had previously written my daily schedule during a short two-week ESL class at the temple when I first arrived. The point of this exercise was to get acquainted with basic action verbs. My first draft at the temple served as pre-writing for this composition. Thus, I could afford to be creative.

Ann: I remember reading a draft of yours and your explaining that you were trying to be creative. Your sentences were short, as if you were walking down the street. "Michigan Ave., building number 18, third floor." chair. I also remember your saying that the teacher wanted complete sentences from you and was not interested in anything "experimental."

Sasha: She only wanted subject/verb complement. When I asked questions, the most famous phrase I heard in the Language Institute was, "It's too early; this is Level II, III, IV." I don't know if that was good or not.

Rigidity of the curriculum

I believed it was an advantage that I had not had English in my native country; I did not have to unlearn anything. Some had had English-English. Others who had had English might have picked up irregular verbs, but not the basics. NLU makes students take their time, but there is disaster by Levels IV and V. They should be teaching new things, not old. I got new things only after class by talking to the teacher. Why should I have had to suffer because I had already taken (learned) the material, but others had not?

Second Language Assessment

It is a problem of testing. Just as is done in Math or other subjects, if the student hasn't had the content for that level, they should be sent to a lower level.

Ann: Yes, I know the pre-assessment is very short. An oral interview and perhaps a short essay on a topic.

Sasha: They should be more accurate in placing students properly.

Then they wouldn't have to spend so much time repeating the material in levels IV and V.

Ann: They place them there because students think they already know English. That's why they even offered to put you initially into Level II.

Sasha: I refused because I know what I need and usually get it. Even my relatives said I should go faster, since it involved more money, money. I just ignored them...

3. My Apartment

We were working on descriptions. We had been trained to use prepositions, such as "in front of"

Ann: That's why you wrote, "I sit in my grandmother's chair, by the window, in the sunlight

4. My City

This was another descriptive composition.

Emphasis on Avoiding Errors

5. My Family

The instructor was very cool; she was not after content. She wanted error-free grammatical sentences using American word order. She wanted the least number of errors. I wouldn't want to risk making any mistakes, since we had no dictionary.

This measured your "actual" knowledge.

Ann: That's why you used sentences from your other compositions. I wondered why it seemed so disjointed.

Sasha: We had lots of memorizing in Level I and lots of copying. We read a text, copied it and then wrote it from dictation.

Teacher Responses

Ann: What did you get in the way of teacher comments?

Sasha: They were usually "excellent."

Ann: Was that your goal, to always get an "excellent?"

Sasha: No, the goal was to get an "excellent" only on the exams.

Ann: Not on the compositions?

Sasha: The compositions were theoretical and technical. They were not really compositions, but more like exercises.

6. Zhanna

We were to compare the "looks and interests of a friend." I had more errors on this one because I used new grammar. Psychologically, I wanted to say more; I didn't want to stick to the rules--I wanted to be as good as the subject itself.

Ann: I noticed that the number of errors increased when the distance between you and the subject decreased.

Sasha: There are fewer errors when I could step outside of the relationship with an acquaintance. But with Zhanna, I had less concern for grammar.

7. My Neighbor

8. My Favorite Restaurant

This was started in class and completed at home. I wouldn't have chosen to write about a restaurant, but the teacher gave it as an example of a favorite 'place.' I was wracking my brain for my favorite restaurant, since I'm not that type of person to go to restaurants. In the Russian culture, restaurants are associated with parties, dancing, lights, smoking and big women.

Ann: What about the restaurant you described? It sounded like you always went there...

Sasha: Only at lunch... It changed at night... It was very cheap.

Ann: Was it near a river like you described?

Sasha: No, I wished it had been...I had to poot [pronunciation] something in.

Level II

1. Hometown

Ann: The number of words per clausehas increased significantly.(16.1) Rather descriptive

Sasha: The topic was 'my neighborhood,' but I didn't know what it meant. It was again descriptive. I just changed it to "Hometown Neighborhood."

Ann: It was interesting that at the very end your voice could be heard. "But I miss my city, my lovely friends, my wonderful teachers; streets of my city--places where I liked to spend my time, and my hometown neighborhood, where I grew up and spent my youth."

The process of acculturation

Sasha: By that time (in my life) I was feeling nostalgic; that was summer; so aphoria, do you have this word? A euphoria of America; the golden country, gold, everyone is rich, no problems--had ended by that time.

Ann: The loss of the dream, the reality...

Sasha: Right. What I had by that time I could appreciate those values of my youth better.

2. Next Year, Jerusalem

Ann: According to one of my committee members, this is an expression Jewish people say upon leaving your company.

Sasha: I don't know about American Jews, but in Russia it means an obligation to live there. In 1987 to '89, many Russians emigrated. All our problems are from our economic state.

Ann: Your family's?

Sasha: No, the country's; Russian Jews.'

Ann: This composition was surprisingly 'dry.'

Sasha: Yes, Lana and I had made no effort to really know each other better, so we were not emotionally involved. The tone of the composition indicates this.

Ann: You were going to Israel because of a woman?

Sasha: Not a woman; a girl.

Ann: I get confused with all these girls. Who are Zhanna and Helen?

Sasha: Zhanna and Helen are both in Ukraine; Lana is in Israel. I was trying to be sarcastic in this composition. An immature relationship produces immature writing...

Ann: So your 'trip' was a metaphor for your relationship?

Sasha: I can't really say that...it was just an assigned topic. I don't really want to go to Israel. Here you have the "good life." In Russia we didn't. Once immigration allowed it, it became popular to say we must gather in Israel.

Ann: Not even to visit? I thought you wanted to take your grandmother.

Sasha: Only to visit. She won't go unless I go; she's afraid. My relatives were supposed to go to Israel, but they changed their passports. I have become accustomed to the good life in America.
What we're doing with these compositions is very general. We need to read them aloud and go over every phrase for its meaning.

Level III

1. My dear Helen

Now we are becoming more personal. The topic was a "letter to a friend." Mr. Franklin gave us an example, but it was so American. The example was too descriptive--about your daily life--not worthy of talking about.

Letter-writing to communicate, not just to inform

My friends don't know about my daily life. I write them about learning English, differences in culture. I tell them that writing is an art; it's what's between the lines. I tell them to vary their reading and read different things.

In Russia, one could only see things through the prism of the Communist system. In America, it is suggested that one not make a decision before knowing all the facts; you must support your statements.

America has more information. You may may mistakes and not always be correct, but you never state a lie. In Russia, you consider lies from the beginning. It is good to know personal lives to understand the music. You need the truth from the beginning.

America has given me the right and freedom to associate and contact teachers. There are no barriers, no (required) respect. Here you have a real chance to respect teachers. This association is part of the learning process. Here you have the freedom to ask questions and to admit your lack of knowledge.

Contrastive Rhetoric

As for the English language itself; Russians should not be so proud of their language. An example is Turgenev's pride in the Russian language. At my level, I can observe (English) texts and it allows me to say that it's as rich a language as Russian.

All people have emotions and express them. It's like art; you don't need to compare art, nor composers.

Ann: Are these letters written in Russian?

Sasha: Yes, they are eight pages long, but it takes me less time now than it did two years ago. I'm not afraid of making mistakes. Writing is what's on my mind, even in Russian.

I realize I can't know everything.

Comparative Education

Many things have been written about the differences between English and Russian teachers. My teacher told me that American teachers should be honored to watch the learning process. Russian teachers are the "beginning and the end"; they are not responsible nor honest.

There are three kinds of teachers: 1) those who know and share what they know, 2) those who don't know and can't share and 3) those who know, but won't share. This has nothing to do with the system; it's human nature.

Ann: Did the emphasis on errors or perfection in the Language Institute cause your writer's block?

Sasha: Not much

Ann: Was it your personality?

Sasha: Yes

Ann: Your Jewish culture?

Sasha: No. It is related or caused by that purity I found in music; the ability to appreciate and see the beauty of it. Not only to hear music but to enjoy it. I found perfection in music and that level of perfection is needed in everything--it's eating me

Ann: You put so much effort into making those posters for your recital.

Sasha: Never again

Ann: You were obsessed

Sasha: I agree

Ann: What is "good" writing to you?

Sasha: "Good" writing is: 1) stating your point, 2) restating it at the end. The American pattern is acceptable. In Russia, we also had plans or outlines. There were points and proofs, but I did not actually learn to do it. I just copied it from books.

We were afraid of our own opinions or to have the right to have them. _The people were not taught to think and defend their opinions._ To ask, "What do you mean?" It has forced me to go deeper; to go to the dictionary and read to the end of each section for all the examples.

Ann: That brings up the whole issue of plagiarism. Some of my students do not understand the ethics of using someone else's thoughts.

Sasha: Right, they think it is just something the teacher has to say. They do not take it seriously. I have never cheated in America. It is against the law. When you are young, you do not understand the philosophical concept that you are going beyond your actual level by cheating.

The importance of grammar

My teacher (Truman College) does not believe in the importance of grammar because she doesn't know it. But we second language students need to know it. Why talk at all if grammar isn't important? English grammar has helped my reading comprehension. I can predict, as you instructed, what will come next. Each acquaintance with any grammar pattern is useful. _Grammar organizes your words, but not your thoughts._ That is work you must do.

10.8

UKRAINE

This was my first taped interview with my case study subject in April of 1994. The setting was my office on the Evanston Campus.

Ann: I am interviewing a student from the Language Institute. He came to the U.S. one year ago. He has just completed Level IV and will be starting Level V next quarter. He may be my subject for my dissertation because I want to compare how English is taught in this country as opposed to how Russian is taught in that country. I have had several experiences in trying to learn Russian and want to interview a student here to find out how effective our methods are compared to those that are used in Russia.
We will begin now by asking Sasha to describe his early childhood. Where were you born, Sasha?

Sasha: I was born in the USSR; in Ukraine in my hometown, Dnierpovostok.

Ann: I did not know it was called "the" Ukraine. I thought I was just being stupid when I called it "the" Ukraine.

Sasha: Uh, it can be either, but my teachers in the Language

Institute. We had talked about the problem, and now that Ukraine has become independent country and not part of an imperial Soviet Union, in the English language we drop the "the."

Ann: Who prefers?

Sasha: Linguists

Ann: Really? Not the Ukrainians?

Sasha: The teachers of English. It has nothing to do with the Ukrainians. We do not have 'articles.'

Ann: That's true

Sasha: So, we say Ukraine, or Ukraines

Ann: Maybe when they called it "the" Ukraine

Sasha: They meant Soviet Socialistic Republic. Now it's not a republic anymore.

Ann: It almost sounds like a region. When there's an article in front of it rather than a separate country.

Sasha: Oh, you said a "region"; region or area of a bigger part.

Ann: It's more in keeping with the times when I refer to it as "Ukraine."

10.8.1

CHILDHOOD IN UKRAINE

This is an interview I conducted with Sasha about his childhood. The setting was my office in House #6 in Evanston in the Fall of 1994.

Ann: Yes, as my father always said, "The song of soup."

Sasha: What?

Ann: "The song of soup." Sound of slurping...

Sasha: Like this? [He makes a snorting sound.]

Ann: Yesterday, Dr. Patterson called me about my father's book.

Sasha: Father's book?

Ann: Yes, he wants to reissue my dad's book...

Sasha: Reissue..?

Ann: My father's autobiography. So he wants me to send him my father's naturalization papers--the original ones. The University of Illinois wants to photograph them.

Sasha: Can't you send copies?

Ann: That's the trouble...they want the originals.

Sasha: Do you know him?

Ann: He only found my father's book in a library. And he thought he would like to...

Sasha: So your father wrote a book?

Ann: Yes, about his life, in English... He found a copy in the Harvard library...

Sasha: Harvard...University?

Ann: Yes, so he wanted a copy of it. Although there are no copies available. My brother gave him a copy. We each have copies for our children. He wanted a copy, although what he did was to xerox the whole book. He wanted the real book.

He wrote a doctoral dissertation about the Korean immigration. And he used my father's book as a resource. Andrew read his book and said that he uses my father's book a lot. Anyway, Sasha, we are doing your autobiography now so...

Sasha: No, that was the beginning; the introduction. What we was talking about.

Ann: I'm going to be using it for part of my Advanced Qualitative course and possibly it could be in my dissertation. I don't know because I don't know how long Sasha will be around while I'm writing my dissertation.

Sasha: Anytime, he will be available...

Ann: Anyway, he will be one of my case studies...

Sasha: Anytime, I'm being not hurried...

Ann: I'm very fortunate that when Sasha came to our Language Institute one year ago, he spoke no English whatsoever and was placed in Level One. So today, he brought me samples of his creative writing in Levels one, two and three. Soon he will bring me samples from Level four and he is currently in Level five.

This summer, if he takes CD, he will be doing more writing. If not, I will give him the essay questions because I have taught CD I and II. And then we will see if and how his writing develops. But as part of my technique, I am doing some interviews with him orally. After having read this woman's disseration, I may expand on her project. She uses think-alouds for her writing, I mean reading, maybe I'll do think-alouds for writing. And maybe I'll be asking Sasha to think aloud as he's writing.

And say anything that comes into his mind...how should I go about this? What word do I need? Should I change the format etc. etc. I don't know if anyone's done think-alouds with writing. So maybe that's what I will do...as part of my dissertation.

Well, anyway, Sasha, we left off when you did not go to Moscow with the woman who offered to take you there...as I remember that was where our last interview ended...

Sasha: Um, hum...

Ann: And our interviews are supposed to probe deeper into areas of further interest. I think you said at that time that your parents did not have the courage or something like that to pursue it vigorously, to move to Moscow. Because of your big family...in Ukraine.

Sasha: Yes, we had whole our big family. Our relatives in Ukraine and

Ann: And being Jewish?

Sasha: Oh, no ...that wasn't the problem in this case because being Jewish, I was invited.

Ann: I didn't mean it was a problem...

Sasha: Being Jewish, I was invited to Moscow, so it was already done.

Ann: No, I don't mean it was a problem; but it could have been a problem...

Sasha: That wasn't the problem, but I'm sure it could have been the problem...

Ann: Were these women who invited you Jewish?

Sasha: Um, I don't think so...

Ann: But they knew you were?

Sasha: I didn't ask, I never asked myself...

Ann: Ask yourself...you could have asked them...

Sasha: I think that they would accept me

Ann: You were how old; thirteen?

Sasha: No, the first time I was five; the second time in Lithuania, I was twelve.

Ann: Oh, yes... We are talking about the Lithuanian one. What happened when you were five? I don't remember....

Sasha: That was the time they invited me...

Ann: The same women? Who?

Sasha: No, people from Moscow. Central Music School. which is under the Moscow Conservatory. That's it...

Ann: What I remember from our last interview was that you said part of the reason your family did not want to move to Moscow was that your family is Jewish, not that being Jewish was the problem, but that being Jewish you could not leave part of your family.

Sasha: Right, that's the problem. My grandmother had both her parents so that was my great grandparents say they she didn't want to leave them. Right, her relatives...three sisters. Now no one is there.

Ann: Three sisters? One is in Skokie.

Sasha: Right.

Ann: Where are the other two?

Sasha: In Israel.

Ann: Oh, OK. Did they follow their own children there?

Sasha: Um, hum.

Ann: And your grandmother's sister followed her children here, or did they all come out together?

Sasha: Together.

Ann: How many years ago?

Sasha: Eight...1989. But the problem, the question which might be asked...why did they go to Israel and America? How could they go? Great-grandparents died during the '80's, 1980's. Yeah, I could even say that was silent permission. So they didn't have to ask anyone, if they could go.

Ann: You mean relatives...

Sasha: Right, for example that sister ...she was the first leaving the USSR.

Ann: She went to Skokie. Was she the oldest?

Sasha: No, the oldest went to Israel. She is the third. So when our great-grandparents were alive, we couldn't even think about it because they were the old patriarchs. Even though the Russian Communist Party took much of their property away from them, such as rivers...

Anna: Rivers?

Sasha: In Ukraine. Big, big rivers, territories...houses

Ann: So your farmer, your grandparents were farmers?

Sasha: No, they had farmers...

Ann: They were landowners?

10.8.2

A MUSICAL BEGINNING

This is a continuation of the first interview with Sasha about his early childhood in Ukraine.

Ann: So I should have been more observant...Tell me about your first experience on the stage.

Sasha:. Oh, to tell the truth I don't remember my first experience on the stage. I remember that one of my first experiences on the stage when I was the age of four, and I remember I was a little boy, child. My bosses, my managers, they put me on a red piano so the audience could be able to see who is producing those sounds. And that I remember that clearly and another time they put me on a drum.

Ann: Who were these people?

Sasha: I could say that they were first music teachers, but I don't know, but now lots of time has lapsed so I do not know who was first, second. Anyway, they were the first people thanks to whom I got into that musical world

10.8.3

INTERVIEW WITH SASHA'S PARENTS

During a lunch which Sasha's parents had prepared for me in their apartment, I interviewed them on Sasha's early literacy environment in August of 1994.

Ann: When did Sasha begin to talk?

Mom: He said a few words at six months, but said nothing after that until he had reached the age of thirteen months. Then he began to speak in complete Russian sentences.

Ann: Was Sasha read to as a child?

Mom: Yes, his grandmother had read fairy tales to him. These were later bound into a single volume and became a beloved source of bedtime reading.

Ann: Did the family participate in church-going?

Mom: No; because we were Russian Jews our maternal great-grandfather discouraged us from attending. However, as an elderly gentleman, he had little to fear from the Soviet government. Naturally, his daughter, Sasha's grandmother had to accompany him to temple, but the rest of the family was not allowed to attend for fear of reprisals.

Ann: Had Sasha ever attended any Jewish functions in Ukraine?

Mom: He participated in Jewish activites only after perestroika had arrived. He attended a Jewish camp one summer, but he did not care for it.

According to Sasha, the whole Jewish religion was fraught with rules. Interestingly enough, both Sasha and his grandmother are enamoured of the beauty of the Russian Orthodox Church despite the fact that she was allowed to attend temple with her grandfather. Sasha collects books on Russian icons and wishes to return to Russia so as to bring back some icons for himself.

This seeming paradox is not so surprising since Sasha had conducted choirs in both Russian Orthodox and Protestant churches in Ukraine. Nevertheless, in Russia he was considered a Jew, but here in the U.S. he is considered a Russian--a distinction Sasha finds amusing.

10.8.4

SHASTOKOVICH MEMOIRS

Sasha brought this book to read aloud to me during the Summer of 1994. The Shastokovich Memoirs, an English translation, was read aloud by Sasha with perfect pronunciation after only having completed Level V of the Language Institute.

Sasha: Today is 18th of June, 1994. I brought a book about "Shastokovich: His Memoirs" as edited by Volkov and translated into English. I would like to read some paragraphs from this book. Maybe this will help Ann understand what I was talking about anti-Semitism in my childhood. OK...

His conversation is changing his stream...Shastakovich is talking about his eighth quartet. He begins to talk about a Jewish question. There is also the Jewish theme from the piano trio in this quartet.

[Sasha's reading is very fast at this point in his development, so I have had a hard time transcribing from the tapes.]

> I think when we speak of musical impressions, that Jewish folk music has made a most powerful impression on me. I never tire of delighting in it; it's multifaceted; it can appear to be happy when it is most tragic. It's almost always laughter through tears. This quality of Jewish folk music is close to my ideas of what music should be. There should always be two layers in music: Jews were tormented for so long that

> they learned to hide their despair. They expressed their despair in dance music. All folk music is lovely, but I can say that the Jewish folk music is unique. Many composers listen to it, including Russian composers like Moussorsky. He carefully set down Jewish folk songs. Many of my works reflect my impression of Jewish folk music.
> This is not only a purely musical issue; this is also a moral issue. I often test a person with his attitude toward Jews. In this day, any person with pretensions of being decent, what's pretensions...cannot be anti-Semitic.

Ann: I agree

Sasha [reading aloud]

> This seems so obvious that I have had to argue this point for 30 years. Once I was passing a bookstore. I was always interested in Jewish folk songs, so I picked up a book on Jewish songs. But it had no melodies, it only contained text, no music. I thought if I picked out several texts and set them to music, I could tell about the fate of the Jewish people. It seemed an important thing to do because I saw anti-Semitism growing all about me. But I couldn't have the cycle performed then.

Sasha: Now he's talking about his Jewish cycle; vocal for tenor, soprano and alto and piano written in the 40's or earlier. It was written from Jewish folk poetry. Opus 79, 1948 when Stalin was still alive. And it wasn't performed until the '60's. So that textbook those were the poetry he used for the cycle. [reading aloud]

> I did an orchestral version of the music.

Sasha: He even gave two versions of that cycle. [reading aloud]

> My parents considered Anti-Semitism a shameful superstition.

Ann: Superstition? I say that's not a good translation...

Sasha: We use this word in Russia; people's mistaken belief...

Ann: I should have clipped this article for you. They're playing "The Merchant of Venice" in Israel. These actors are trying to show that Shylock was pushed to the classic stereotype of a Jew. Superstition could have meant "stereotype."

Sasha: We have this word too; but we use the word "stereotype"; it's not a mistake...more peacefully... "Superstition" means it is wrong; mistaken. "Ignorant" means they do not know; but these people mean they do know.

Ann: We say ignorant people are more superstitious...

Sasha: [Reading aloud]

> In that sense, I was given a singular opp..opportunity. In my youth I came across anti-Semitism among my peers [peers?] who always thought Jews were given preferential treatment. They didn't remember the pogroms. The ghettos...

Sasha: You use "ghettos"...in the European sense it means the camps, like Buchenwald.

Ann: I've heard of ghettos...neighborhoods.

Sasha: Prisons, gulags..., Germans made for Jews.

Ann: Who made the Warsaw Ghetto; the Germans?

Sasha: We call the "camps" with gas cameras, ghettos.

Ann: You mean Warsaw Ghetto was a prison, not a neighborhood like the Chicago slums?

Sasha: When I hear that word, I shudder...

So he's saying...[reading aloud]

> Did you forget about the ghettos and quotas? It was a kind of opposition to the authorities. I never condoned an anti-Semitic tone even then.

Ann: I read it was against the official policy to discriminate against Jews.

Sasha: [But this was before the revolution...reading aloud]

> I was much gentler about this unworthy trait than I am now. Later I broke with good friends if I saw that they had any anti-Semitic trends. Even before the war, the attitude toward Jews had changed dramatically. It turned out we had far to go before we achieved brotherhood. The Jews became the most persecuted people of Europe. Jews became a symbol for me of all of man's defenselessness. All I heard was, 'All the kikes went to Tashkent to fight.'

Sasha: This meant they didn't go to war. Despite of the fact all the Jews who perished in the camps. [reading aloud]

> And if they saw a Jew with military decorations, 'Kike, where did you buy the medals?' That's when I wrote the Violin Concerto, the Jewish Cycle, and the 4th Quartet. None of these works could be performed then. They were heard after Stalin's death; I still can't believe it. The 4th Symphony was played 25 years after I wrote it. There are compositions that have yet to be performed. No one knows when they will be played. I am very heartened when I see young people's reactions to my feelings on the Jewish question. And I see that the Russian intelligensia remains intractably opposed to anti-Semitism. And the many years trying to enforce anti-Semitism from above has not taken hold, even among the simple folk.

Sasha: I disagree with these statements about the intelligentsia and the simple folk...

Ann: I thought it was a policy that all Soviet peoples were equal...

Sasha: It was the policy inofficially...

Ann: That's not what Lenin wrote...

Sasha: [reading aloud]

> Recently I went to Reckenwald Station (in St. Petersburg) to buy a lemonade. THere's a little stall that sells everything.

Sasha: What's a stall? [reading aloud]

> There was a woman who looked very Jewish who began to complain loudly, 'Why is there such a line? And why are canned peas only sold with something else?'"

Ann: Why did she have to buy the canned peas?

Sasha: They used to sell unneeded things you had to buy with something else. This was the planned economy...No one wanted to buy it.... [reading aloud]
And the young salesman replied, 'If you don't like it here, citizenness, why don't you go to Israel? There are no long lines there and you could buy peas just like that.'
So Israel was pictured in a positive way as a country with no lines and plenty of peas. And that's a dream for the Soviet consumer. And the line looked with interest at the citizenness who could go to a country with no lines and more peas than you could want.

Shastokovich Memoirs II

This is a continuation of Shastokovich's Memoirs as read aloud by Case Study Subject on June 18, 1994.

> The last time I was in America I saw 'Fiddler on the roof.' The primary emotion was homesickness; you sense it in the music, the dancing. Even though the motherland is a so and so (meaning such and such), more like a step-mother, but people still miss her."

Sasha: (Her, her...But in Russian, table is 'he.')

> That loneliness made itself felt. That loneliness was the most important aspect...It would be good if Jews could live peacefully in Russia where they were born. But we must never forget the danger about anti-Semitism and keep reminding others of it, because the infection

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is still alive. That's why I was overjoyed when I heard Babi Yar.

Sasha: (This was a place in Kiev where Germans killed hundreds of thousands of mostly Jews.)

Ann: What is the town in Ukraine where they had so many pogroms?

Why in the Ukraine?

Sasha: Because there are many Jews there...

Ann: Why are there so many Jews there?

Sasha: Because they live there...

Ann: Where did they come from?

Sasha: From Poland....who knows? From Israel...(ha,ha)

Ann: There are more in Ukraine than in Russia?

Sasha: Yah, maybe not now. And the Ukrainians didn't like it... [reading aloud]

They tried to destroy the memory of Babi Yar; first the Germans, then the Ukrainian government.

Sasha: (In 1960 you could see bones under...now parks, but those were wild parks. Can you imagine, no one bothered to bury them? No memorials etc.) [reading aloud]

After Yevteshenko, it became clear that it would never become forgotten. That is the power of art. People knew about Babi Yar before Yevteshenko's poem, but they were silent. But when they read the poem, the silence was broken. Art destroys silence. I know that many will not agree with me and will point out other nable (noble) aims of art. They'll talk about beauty , grace and other high qualities, but you won't catch me with that bait.

You can sugar-coat a frog, but I still won't put it in my mouth.

> Rimsky-Korsakov couldn't abide it (anti-Semitism) either. He became rabid about the filthy trait. In Korsakov's big school, there was no room for anti-Semitism.

Sasha--[paraphrasing what Shostakovich meant]:

Jews due to political life circumstances had to hide their despair; not forget about it, but hide it. This double meaning of music, this multi-moodedness in one piece goes together like polyphony. You can hear dance music and at the same time you hear suffering. This is very close to my understanding of what music should be.

10.8.5

PERSONALITY OF CASE STUDY SUBJECT

This is a retrospective interview on Sasha's composing process conducted on Dec. 11, 1994. I tried to find the roots of his writing block and possible relationship to his culture and personality.

Perfectionism

Ann: Do you think your need for perfection comes from your Jewish heritage?

Sasha: No, I've always been a perfectionist in everything I do. Since my field is music, this is even more important, for in music, you must be perfect. Otherwise, don't bother...

A great and famous female Russian singer, Galena Vishnevskaya, Rostropovich's wife, made a mistake when singing in Shastokovich's Symphony #14. She must not have perfect pitch because she went up too high. It was up to the violinist to play, but she did not listen to the last note. It was the premiere of Shostakovich's #14 about death and she was nervous. In her book, she comes across as perfect.

She, as I perceive it, because of her personality and self-love, does not work hard enough to avoid mistakes. The last two notes of the introduction should have given her the proper key.

Ann: Does that mean she shouldn't have been singing?

Sasha: No...Shastokovich's Symphony #4 is considered not to be perfect in form, like his fifth. In form, he was finding his own style.

He had too many musical ideas and was unable to choose the most important ones, not concise. I consider that symphony very mature in the sense that the many ideas, like a fountain, are developed using connections very well--what is called "symphonism."

He wrote this in a very difficult time--not only composing but working with material. Since death was not a appropriate topic, it was never performed in the Soviet Union. No one knew the music, although it was perfect.

Afterwards, we see a philosopher in him. Critics said it was not as concise as it should have been, but that was his way. Although genius implies simplicity, Shastokovich's 4th was a laboratory for symphonism. The fifth was mature because he was more concise and followed more exactly the philosophical framework he had set up for it--now a mature symphonist.

Number 1 was a scholar's work in the old St. P. tradition, like Glazanov and Korsakov. He had his "flowers." In #4, the flowers had matured. The opera, "Lady McBeth" was written at the same time as #3, when he was in his '30's.

Knowing how to write and develop things like a melody with other melodies is the work of a composer; like writing.

Ann: Would you ever consider writing a musical composition of your own?

Sasha: That's the trouble; I would not, even though it was possible because I would be afraid to make a mistake. Shastokovich was a genius; I'm not. I will when I know more...I will also write in English when I know more; but now the more I know (grammar) the more difficult it becomes. However, the more you practice it, you will learn it and it will become easier...

APPENDIX C

Questionnaires, Assessment Protocols

HIGHLAND PARK

PUPIL WRITING EVALUATION.DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

	High 4	3	2	1 low
Written Expression	Displays richness through expression and description appropriate for the genre; has something special and/or unique. You'll know it when you see it!	Displays variety in expression and description	Writing has basic expression, minimal description	Writing has limited expression and lacks description
Ideas	Well developed ideas, exhibits originality and sophistication	Appropriate ideas, complete and unified	Ideas may be may be one dimensional, incomplete or disconnected	Ideas are are not related
Organization	Well organized, concise and flows evenly	Appropriate organization	Inconsistent structure and organization but conveys meaning	Poorly organized and/or incomplete sentences
Sentence Structure	Complex and complete sentences	Complete sentences but may but may be repetitive or stilted	Sentences may be complete but constructed awkwardly	Incomplete sentences
Vocabulary Usage	Precise	Varied	Simple	Limited
Tone and	Displays emo-	Reflects some	May display	Tone and

Feeling	tional or personal tone	use of emotional or personal tone and/or humor	limited tone and emotion	emotion not apparent
Topic Development	Reflects deep thought and involvement	Communicates author's knowledge of topic	Demonstrates knowledge of topic, but poorly expressed	Ideas do not relate to the topic
Grammar and mechanics	Excellent grasp of grammar and and mechanics	Meets grade level expectations	Inconsistent use of proper grammar and mechanics	Nonexistent or incorrect grammar and mechanics

The criteria list above is designed to help teachers develop a common view of writing expectations.

Writing Questionnaire

Please check the statements that are correctly describe you:

I am a native American student

English is not my first language

English is not spoken at home

I have had _____ years of English

On a scale between 1 and 7, please indicate how you feel about writing in English:

	Never		Sometimes			Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I believe I am a good writer							
2. I believe I am a poor writer							
3. I feel anxious when I read an essay question.							
4. I become confused when there are several parts to a question.							
5. I do not know if I have to answer all parts of a question.							
6. I am afraid that I might forget to answer one part of the question.							
7. I often do not understand the meaning of a question.							
8. I read each part of an essay question carefully before writing.							

Never Sometimes Always

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. I begin to think of possible ways to answer the question as soon as I have finished reading it.

10. I write down all the ideas that come to my mind as I am reading the question.

11. I create a map or outline of my ideas so that I will not forget any of them.

12. I may write these ideas in my native language. I may also write down my sentences in my native language before translating them into English.

13. I often become discouraged because I must look up so many words as I write.

14. The word order of English is different than my native language, so I have difficulty when writing English.

15. I have trouble with the mechanics of writing in English.

16. Punctuation gives me the most trouble when writing.

17. I have difficulty with plurals.

18. Articles give me the most trouble.

19. Pronouns are hard for me.

20. I have problems with subject-verb agreement.

21. I have difficulty forming questions.

Never Sometimes Always

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. I do not worry about the mechanics of writing in English.

23. I write for meaning and edit later for spelling and grammar.

24. I prefer to write stories.

25. I like to write about my own experiences.

26. I enjoy writing my reaction to something I have read

27. I often write letters to my friends.

28. I keep a daily log or diary.

29. I enjoy reading what my classmates have written

30. I only like writing for myself.

31. Emphasis on correct grammar and mechanics made writing difficult.

32. Topics were assigned without considering my own interests.

33. We were allowed to free-write on topics of our own choosing.

34. Model compositions were given to us as examples of good writing.

35. We did sentence combining in class.

FORM B

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE

TOPIC STUDENT DATE

COMPONENTS	RANGE	DESCRIPTION
CONTENT	30–27	*EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:* well-reasoned thesis • related ideas • specific development (personal experience—illustration—examples—facts—opinions) • good use of description/comparison-contrast
	26–22	*GOOD:* adequate reasoning • thesis partly developed • occasionally unrelated ideas
	21–17	*FAIR TO POOR:* poor reasoning • unnecessary information • very little development
	16–13	*VERY POOR:* irrelevant • no development • (or) not enough to evaluate
ORGANIZATION	20–18	*EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:* effective thesis • strong topic sentences • introductory and concluding sentences/paragraphs • use of transitions • organized
	17–14	*GOOD:* clear topic sentences • no concluding sentences or paragraph • weak transitions • incomplete sequencing/organization
	13–10	*FAIR TO POOR:* no topic sentence • lacks transitions • little or no sequencing/organization
	9–7	*VERY POOR:* does not communicate one idea • no evidence of organization • (or) not enough to evaluate
VOCABULARY	20–18	*EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:* correct use of idioms/word forms (prefixes—suffixes—roots—compounds) in context • effective word choice • word meaning precise
	17–14	*GOOD:* mostly effective and correct idioms/word forms/word choice in context • meaning clear
	13–10	*FAIR TO POOR:* frequent errors in idioms/word forms/word choice • some translation • meaning confused
	9–7	*VERY POOR:* little knowledge of English vocabulary • mostly translation • (or) not enough to evaluate
LANGUAGE USE	25–22	*EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:* sentence variety • correct verb tenses • few errors in subject-verb agreement, number, word order/use, articles, pronouns, prepositions
	21–18	*GOOD:* effective but simple constructions • mostly correct verb tenses • several errors in subject-verb agreement, number, word order/use, articles, pronouns, prepositions, but meaning clear
	17–11	*FAIR TO POOR:* ineffective simple constructions • frequent errors in verb tense, subject-verb agreement, number, word order/use, articles, pronouns, prepositions
	10–5	*VERY POOR:* limited mastery of sentence rules • many errors in verb tense, subject-verb agreement, number, word order/use, articles, pronouns, prepositions
MECHANICS	5	*EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD:* few errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4	*GOOD:* occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	3	*FAIR TO POOR:* frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting unclear
	2	*VERY POOR:* dominated by errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • illegible handwriting
TOTAL SCORE	READER	COMMENTS

Hughey, J., Wormuth, D., Hartfiel, V. & Jacobs, H. (1983). Teaching ESL composition: Principles and techniques, 240. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Pub., Inc.